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Family Science

Munich  Feb. 26–27, 2026

FACES 2026

**Families And Challenges in Evolving
Societies
in the D-A-CH region and beyond**

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SWISS CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
IN LIFE COURSE RESEARCH

Programme

Thursday, Feb 26th: Main Conference - Part I		Room
9:00-9:30	Registration and gathering	Lobby
9:30-9:45	Opening and welcome	K1
09:45-11:15	Session 1A: Childcare, Employment, and Partnership Chair: <i>Ayhan Adams</i> • Estimating the Effect of Working From Home on Parents' Division of Childcare and Housework: A New Panel IV Approach (Schüller) • Fathers' and Mothers' Joint Longitudinal Earnings Trajectories Before and After First Birth in Austria (Vargha et al.) • The Interplay of Childcare Histories and Maternal Work Trajectories (S. Schmid et al.) • Dense Intimate Knowledge: Conceptualising the Co-Presence of Work and Family in the Home (Mikats)	K1
	Session 1B: Generations Chair: <i>Bettina Hünteler</i> • Social Inequalities in Support Between Multiple Generations in Europe Over Time (Deindl) • Simulating the Historical and Future Availability of Living Ancestors Throughout the Life Course, 1751-2100 (Calderón-Bernal) • Uncovering Hidden Kin: Cross-National Evidence From KINMATRIX (Jessee et al.)	K2
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	Session 2B: Mental Health and Stress Chair: <i>Eva-Maria Schmidt</i> • Mental Health in Adulthood After Prenatal Exposure to Maternal Stress Due to Sudden Loss of Close Relatives (Broos et al.) • Do I Care? Maternal Self-Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Austria (Dafert) • Disappointed Believers Suffer More: How Marriage Permanence Beliefs Shape Depressive Symptoms After Separation and Divorce (Philipp et al.) • Unequal Happiness Gains From Summer Breaks: Evidence From European Parents (Rotondi)	K2

	Session 2C: Wealth and Property <i>Chair: Bettina Hünteler</i> • Family and Reproductive Welfare Across Europe (Zagel et al.) • Forgotten Property: Operationalizing Couple-Specific Property Arrangements for Standardized Surveys (Eichhorn et al.) • Social and Material Participation of Children in Low-Income Households in Germany - a Mixed-Methods Research Project (Globisch et al.) • From Separate to Shared: Marriage Beliefs, Homeownership, and Couples' Money Management (Althaber et al.)	K3
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	Session 3B: Poverty and Inequality <i>Chair: Bernhard Riederer</i> • The Education-Specific Impact of First Birth on Poverty Risk Within Couples in Austria (Siegert et al.) • The social gradient in infant health from a couple-level perspective: Revisiting the heterogamy penalty hypothesis (Metzger et al.) • "I Can't Relate to You!" Children's Subjective Poverty Experience and Their Perceptions of the Parent-Child Relationship in Germany (Stein) • Partnership Status and Parental Support: Evidence of Compounded Disadvantage Across European Welfare Regimes (Corradi-Eiger)	K2
	Session 3C: Relationships in and of families <i>Chair: Julia Sauter</i> • Digital Transformation and the Family: Is Digital Communication a Benefit or a Threat to Parent-Child Relationships? (Mellies et al.) • Stability and Change in Sibling Relationships in Childhood: Latent Profiles and Transitions (Wittmann) • The Family-Childhood Nexus in Home-School Relations (Eunicke)	K3
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	Session 4C: Power relations in families Chair: Laura Bernardi • Doing Democracy in Families: Fathers, Teens, and the Practice of Democracy at Home (Possinger et al.) • Sexual Autonomy and SDG 5.6.1: International Comparison and Regional Determinants (Shapoval et al.) • "Abuse Was in the Room": Gender-Specific Gaslighting in Couples, Family and Parenting Counselling (Burschel)	K3
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	Session 5C: Family Diversity, Attitudes and Inequality Chair: Anne-Kristin Kuhnt Attitudes Toward Family Diversity: A Systematic Review and Conceptual Framework of Structure and Composition (Hoffman et al.) Challenges of Established Gender and Parental Roles in Evolving Societies: The Non-Birthing Parent in Lesbian-Queer Family Constellations (Zimmermann et al.) LGBTQ+ Families Navigating Inequalities, Normalization, and Struggles for Recognition (Teschlade et al.) Sexual Minority Orientation and Singlehood: A Double Jeopardy for Life Satisfaction? (L. Schmid et al.)	K3
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15:00-15:15	Closing remarks and end of the conference	K1

Organizing committee:

Ayhan Adams (University of Osnabrück)
 Laura Bernardi (University of Lausanne/LIVES)
 Laura Castiglioni (German Youth Institute, DJI)
 Bettina Hünteler (German Institute for Economic Research, DIW Berlin)
 Anne-Kristin Kuhnt (University of Rostock)
 Bernhard Riederer (Austrian Academy of Sciences)
 Julia Sauter (University of Lausanne/LIVES)
 Eva-Maria Schmidt (University of Vienna/OIF)
 Claudia Zerle-Elsäßer (German Youth Institute, DJI)
 Gundula Zoch (Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg)

faces2026@univie.ac.at

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Abstracts

Keynote:

Chair: Claudia Zerle-Elsäßer

Room: K1

Charlotte Faircloth: What is ‘intensive parenting’ and why does it matter?

Recent work in history and the social sciences has drawn attention to what has been termed a shift toward ‘intensive parenting culture over the last 50 years – both in Anglophone countries, as well as beyond. The starting point is the observation that the role and meaning of parenthood has changed in recent years, such that child-rearing has expanded to encompass a growing range of activities that were not previously seen as an obligatory dimension of this task. The diagnosis offered by these scholars is part historical and part conceptual, drawing on ideas about infant psychology and the construction of childhood (and therefore motherhood and fatherhood) over time. As the paper explores, this cultural turn towards intensive parenting has not been uniformly experienced by all parents (race, gender, class, and geography all shape its internalization) but it remains an idealized standard against which many parents assess themselves. The paper considers some the challenges that have emerged in recent years, particularly in light of Covid-19, as well as the more negative impact and implications of a more intensive parenting on parent-infant relationships.

Session 1A: Childcare, Employment, and Partnership

Chair: Ayhan Adams

Room: K1

Estimating the Effect of Working From Home on Parents' Division of Childcare and Housework: A New Panel IV Approach (Simone Schüller)

German Youth Institute (DJI), Germany; CESifo, Germany; IZA, Germany; FBK-IRVAPP, Italy; GLO

This study investigates whether (and how) working from home (WFH) affects the gender division of parental unpaid labor. The hope is that WFH might defuse conflicts between work and family life and could pave the way for more gender equality in paid labor and unpaid family care work (Mas and Pallais 2017, 2020; Goldin 2014). I use the recent COVID-19 pandemic that brought an unanticipated yet lasting shift to WFH combined with a measure of occupational WFH feasibility (Alipour et al. 2023) as a quasi-experiment to employ an instrumental variable (IV) approach and estimate causal effects. In doing so, this study also relates to the broader literature on causal impacts of WFH (e.g. Bloom et al. 2015 or Angelici and Profeta 2024). I use unique longitudinal data from the "Growing up in Germany" (AID:A) panel study, which administered a pre-pandemic wave in 2019, and a post-pandemic wave in 2023. AID:A contains rich information on mothers' and fathers' time use for work, commuting, childcare, and housework. I find that the most robust effects emerge for frequent (at least once a week) paternal WFH on parental division of housework: families in which fathers start weekly WFH in the period 2019 to 2023—due to their occupational WFH capacity in combination with the pandemic WFH-boost—experience a significant decrease in the maternal share of housework. Interestingly, this shift appears to be mainly driven by a reduction of maternal time use for housework (combined with an increase of her work hours) and less by an increase in paternal time use for housework suggesting cross-parent spillover effects. Further analysis confirms changes in paternal gender role attitudes as a plausible mechanism. While previous research focuses on work-family balance as a women's issue, my results underscore the importance of fathers' workplace flexibility for gender inequality at home.

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Couple Employment Dynamics and First Childbirths in Europe (Kristina Dorofeeva) - cancelled

University of Florence

In recent years, Europe has experienced persistent economic instability marked by structural labour market weaknesses, high youth unemployment, and in some cases, limited public support for families. This macro-level instability has contributed to widespread economic uncertainty at the individual level, particularly among young couples increasingly navigating precarious employment conditions. This uncertainty significantly shapes fertility behaviour, contributing to postponed or foregone childbearing. Yet, despite growing recognition that fertility behaviour results from joint decision-making, existing research rarely examines how each partner's employment situation contributes to this dynamic – especially in contexts where traditional gender norms and employment disparities persist.

This study investigates how employment type of each partner influences the likelihood of having a first childbirth. Using EU-SILC longitudinal data from 2005 to 2021, the logistic regression analyses focus on couples from 19 countries.

Key findings reveal a decoupling of female job instability from fertility deterrence: women's precarious employment is less of a barrier to first childbirth than in the past. In contrast, male employment instability – especially temporary contracts – remains a significant constraint. Notably, couples where both partners have temporary contracts exhibit rising first-birth probabilities, suggesting adaptation to normative economic precarity. Regional variation is pronounced: while Mediterranean and Nordic countries show high first-birth likelihoods among couples with stable male and precarious female employment, East-Central Europe still penalises male instability heavily.

This study contributes to fertility research by focusing on the couple as a decision-making unit, demonstrating how gendered labour expectations intersect with structural inequalities and uncertainty. It also underscores the importance of institutional context in shaping childbearing behaviour. Policy implications point to the need for labour market stabilisation and a broader shift toward gender-equal family roles to support family formation under unstable employment conditions.

Fathers' and mothers' joint longitudinal earnings trajectories before and after first birth in Austria (Lili Vargha, Nadia Steiber & Rudolf Winter-Ebmer)

University of Vienna, Austria

This paper analyzes long-term earnings trajectories of Austrian first-time parents from a dyadic perspective, covering four years before and twenty-one years after the birth of their first child. Using Group Based Multi Trajectory Modeling (Nagin et al 2018) and longitudinal administrative data, we jointly model mothers' and fathers' typical earnings trajectories alongside parity progression. This joint approach captures the simultaneous development of both parents' earnings, extending prior research that has largely focused on within-couple earnings inequality or mothers' relative income shares, often neglecting absolute income levels. Our dataset includes all first births in Austria between 1990 and 1997 (N=160464), allowing a comprehensive analysis of within- and between-couple differences in earnings trajectories across the transition to parenthood. After identifying typical joint earnings trajectories, we examine how trajectory group membership varies by the couple's socio-economic characteristics, particularly the educational constellation of the parents. Results show that when the mother is more educated, couples have a higher probability of becoming dual earners more rapidly. In contrast, when the father is more educated, couples are more likely to experience a more gradual return to dual earning or maintain a stable male-breadwinner pattern. Couples in which both partners have tertiary education follow less specialized earnings patterns than less-educated homogamous couples. While primarily exploratory, our study provides new insights into the development of income inequalities within and between couples after childbirth, highlighting how absolute and relative resources shape parental earnings trajectories from a dynamic couple perspective.

The Interplay of Childcare Histories and Maternal Work Trajectories (Susanne Schmid¹& Hannah Steinberg²)

1 University of Bamberg (BAGSS), University of Oldenburg; 2 Institute for Employment Research

European countries increased funding for early childhood education and care (ECEC) to support maternal employment. While research mainly examines how institutional childcare supports maternal employment, knowledge about the simultaneous development of employment and childcare remains incomplete, despite external caregivers being crucial for mothers' work participation. This study takes a trajectory-based approach to (1) examine how different childcare types and maternal employment are interrelated, and (2) analyze how childcare-work patterns vary by socioeconomic background.

Drawing on the life-course-perspective, we focus on the linked-lives paradigm to explore the interplay between mother's and children's life domains. Based on rational cost-benefit-considerations, we argue that advantaged mothers, facing higher opportunity costs of childcare, enter employment and ECEC earlier, while less advantaged mothers delay both. Therefore, we contribute (1) by providing novel evidence on the interplay of maternal employment and

childcare histories from a trajectory-based perspective; and (2) we extend previous studies by considering the full range of employment and childcare statuses to deepen the understanding of social realities.

We use a linkage of the newborn-sample of the German National Educational Panel Study and administrative maternal employment trajectories (NEPS-SC1-ADIA7521; 2012-2017; $N \approx 1,642$) to identify childcare-work-patterns conducting multichannel sequence and cluster analysis. We assess monthly information on childcare usage from birth until age five (parents, family, institutions, childminders and combinations) and maternal employment (full-time, part-time or marginal employment, parental leave, unemployment, inactivity). Using multinomial regressions, we identify characteristics predicting cluster affiliation.

Results in Figure 1 reveal six childcare-work-trajectories that extend beyond typically expected patterns. Three family-focused-clusters (1, 3, 4) show that lower maternal workforce participation occurs together with long parental childcare and late institutional enrollment. Conversely, three work-focused-clusters (2, 5, 6) involve early employment re-entry, either with institutional childcare alone or with family support and both combinations. Next steps will explore heterogeneity within and between clusters more deeply.

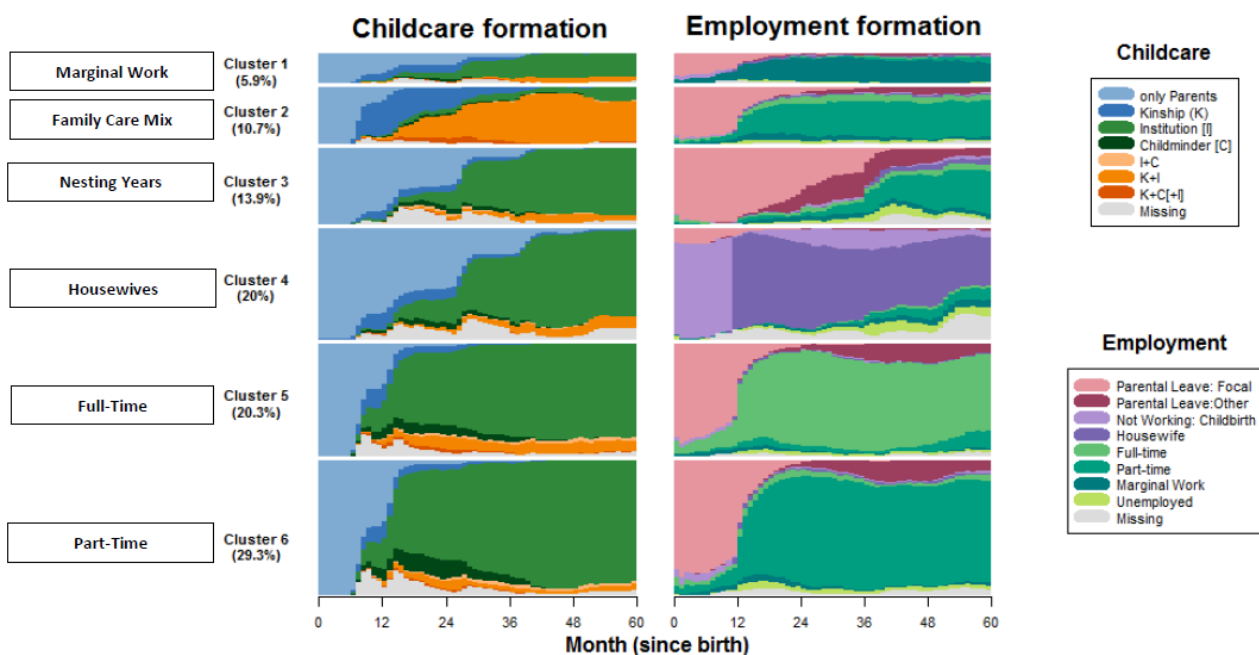


Figure 1: Status Percentage Plots of Childcare-Employment-Clusters
Source: NEPS-SC1-ADIA752, 2012-2017, $n=1,642$; own calculations.

Dense Intimate Knowledge: Conceptualising the Co-Presence of Work and Family in the Home (Jana Mikats)

TH Mannheim, Germany

Research on work-family relations tends to adopt an individualised, adult-centred, and dichotomous perspective. Close examination of the family side of this relation – and consideration of different family actors, especially children – is often lacking. This paper addresses this shortcoming by taking a family practice approach (Morgan, 2011) to the specific situation of parents' home-based work. To understand how family and work are co-constituted in everyday life within workhomes, I ask who and which intimate qualities are generated in "doing family" in relation to home-based work.

The paper draws on a qualitative, multi-method study with 11 families in two Austrian cities, including the perspectives of 21 parents (15 of whom worked from home) and 19 children. Using grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2003), the analysis focuses on the co-presence of parent and child and conceptualises how a sense of family emerges both because of and in spite of the tensions between family and work in workhomes.

I propose the concept of "dense intimate knowledge" to capture the breadth and depth of children's understanding of their home-based working parents and their work practices as a result of regular co-presence. This concept contributes to rethinking work-family relations by challenging dualistic constructions: it highlights forms of intimacy generated beyond face-to-face interaction and through the intersection of work and family practices.

This perspective is particularly relevant given the increasing prevalence of home-based work due to digitalisation and the growing popularity of hybrid or home-office arrangements – developments that, I argue, may open up new forms of family intimacy.

Session 1B: Generations

Chair: Bettina Hünteler

Room: K2

Social inequalities in support between multiple generations in Europe over time (Christian Deindl)

Department of Social Sciences, TU Dortmund University, Germany

Family members support each other. Parents help their adult children with financial transfers and hands-on-support and childcare, while children later on often support their older parents with help and care. However, profound social inequalities linked to different need and opportunity structures as well as public transfers within different contexts can be suspected. Given the growing problem of many western welfare states to finance their pensions and health care, poverty in old age is a growing risk. The consequences of poverty for transfers within the family are not well understood.

While there is some research on each aspect separately, and some research on the connections between certain transfer types at certain family stages, there is still no conclusive study bringing together all different support types between three generations from different social backgrounds over time. In our view, taking a longitudinal multi-generational perspective is essential to capture dependencies and negotiations within families. If middle-aged parents have to take care of their own older parents, they have fewer resources for their children, who might then receive less attention and support from their parents. This may differ according to individuals' access to support from public or private institutions. Here, country and regional specifics have a huge impact on support patterns within the family, which can only be captured when looking into developments and change. Using six waves of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) we look at intergenerational transfers between three generations over time across multiple European regions, considering mid-aged Europeans in the "sandwich" position between older parents and children and include both transfer directions over time to assess the links between social inequality, changes within the family and country level, and intergenerational solidarity. Our results show the importance of the middle-generation for transfers in the family. We are able to show that poverty has a tremendous negative effect on transfer pattern across all generation in Europe.

Simulating the historical and future availability of living ancestors throughout the life course, 1751–2100 (Liliana P. Calderón-Bernal)

Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and Stockholm University

How common has it been and will it be to have living parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents throughout one's life course? As kinship networks are shaped by demographic behaviour (Caswell and Song, 2021; Alburez-Gutierrez et al., 2023; Kolk et al., 2023; Jiang et al.,

2023, 2025), long-term patterns and changes in ancestral availability should be examined alongside historical changes in fertility and mortality. In past centuries, shorter lifespans meant that elderly ancestors were rarely alive throughout one's lifetime. However, from the 20th century onwards, mortality change and increased longevity have expanded opportunities for family interactions across multiple generations (Uhlenberg, 1980, 1996; Bengtson, 2001; Murphy, 2010, 2011).

This research uses SOCSIM demographic microsimulation to reconstruct and project the availability of parents, grandparents and great-grandparents throughout the life courses of cohorts born between 1751 and 2000. A large microsimulation for Sweden is run over 1751-2100 using age-specific fertility and mortality rates from the Human Fertility Collection, the Human Fertility Database, the Human Mortality Database and the World Population Prospects (United Nations, 2024). This produces synthetic populations with fully-recorded information on vital events and kinship networks.

Two types of cohort-level measures are calculated: mean numbers of parents, grandparents and great-grandparents alive at birth and lifetime overlap with each ancestor. Following Song and Mare (2019) and Caswell and Vries (2025), overlap with ancestors is operationalised as: years with at least one living ancestor of a given type, aggregate person-years of overlap summed across all ancestors, and mean overlap per ancestor.

By analysing age and cohort patterns in ancestral availability over time, this study sheds light on how demographic change shapes opportunities for intergenerational relationships, support, and caregiving. Although the analysis focuses on Sweden, the approach can be applied to other contexts and is relevant to debates on ageing populations and family change.

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Uncovering hidden kin: Cross-national evidence from KINMATRIX (Lisa Jessee, Lea Ellwardt & Thomas Leopold)

¹University of Cologne, Department of Sociology and Social Psychology

Family relationships are central to individuals' lives, yet demographic shifts, such as rising divorce rates, remarriages, and parent-child estrangement, may weaken connections to extended relatives. In some cases, this may lead to hidden kin: family members whose existence is known but whose name or living status is unknown, and with whom no contact or support is exchanged. The prevalence of hidden kin likely varies across societies, depending on rates of divorce, remarriage, estrangement, and prevailing levels of familism. Against this background, this study examines the prevalence of hidden kin across countries and different kin types (parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, half-siblings). We draw on cross-national data from the KINMATRIX survey (N = 11,911 anchors; N = 240,156 dyads), covering nine European countries (UK, Germany, Poland, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and the Netherlands) as well as the U.S. Hidden kin were identified when either the name, the living status, or both were unknown. Our analyses reveal the highest prevalence of hidden kin in Denmark, Finland, the U.S., and the UK, and, as expected, the lowest prevalence in more familistic contexts such as Italy and Poland. Results further indicate distinct patterns across kin types and countries. While

in most countries hidden kin are most common among paternal and maternal grandfathers and cousins, in Italy, Poland, and Germany, the highest prevalence is found among paternal half-siblings. Overall, the findings highlight how cross-cultural differences shape knowledge gaps within family networks and, in turn, influence individuals' access to family-based social capital.

Inheritance Orientations: Meanings of Inheritance for Future Testators (Judith Körte) - *cancelled*

Abteilung für Kultur- und Sozialgeographie Humboldt Universität zu Berlin

Inheritance is increasingly shaping wealth distribution and social inequality in Germany. Beyond these discussions on legal regulation and taxation, inheritance connects domains that are often treated separately in both public discourse and sociology: economy and family, public and private life, money and love.

In light of the growing role of inheritance in perpetuating social inequality, it is crucial to understand how economic and emotional dimensions intersect in the perspectives of future testators – those who actively decide how property will be distributed within generational relationships. Their orientations and processes of meaning-making offer key insights into the mechanisms behind inheritance practices.

Drawing on four semi-structured couple interviews with adults aged 55 and older, the findings of the study reveal that inheritance is embedded in multiple ambivalences: participants negotiate between material and emotional dimensions of bequests, between familial care and societal responsibility, and between meritocratic ideals and private property. While inheritance appears as a material resource and a symbolic bridge across generations, many participants deliberately distance themselves from emotionally charged notions of legacy to avoid conflict. Strategies of concealment are evident in the familial care and societal responsibility: respondents highlight education and personal support as their “true legacy,” downplaying the role of wealth transfer to maintain narratives of personal achievement and counter public discourses about inequality. Subtle gender differences emerge, with women emphasising emotional continuity and men foregrounding material provision and achievement, shaped by traditional provider identities.

Overall, the study demonstrates that inheritance extends beyond financial transfer, functioning as a site where individuals confront mortality, articulate values, and navigate tensions between private loyalty and public justice.

Session 2A: Parenthood, Care Work, and Well-being

Chair: Gundula Zoch

Room: K1

Experiencing the Demands of Parenthood: How Unpaid Care Work Shapes Parental Well-Being in Germany (Sina C. Löwe)

DYNAMICS Doctoral Programme, Humboldt University of Berlin & Hertie School

The transition to parenthood represents a critical and transformative period in the life course, characterised by profound changes in social roles, routines, and emotional demands. Previous studies indicate that the mental well-being consequences of this transition often differ between men and women. However, the underlying mechanisms driving these gender differences remain insufficiently understood, and empirical evidence for Germany, where traditional gender norms and a persistent care gap prevail, is still limited.

Therefore, this study examines how paid and unpaid work arrangements shape trajectories of parental well-being, either moderating or mediating the impact of parenthood, with analyses stratified by gender. Drawing on longitudinal data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), the analyses cover a period from three years before to three years after the birth of a first child. Fixed-effects regression models with interaction and mediation terms are applied to capture within-person changes in well-being, measured using the SF-12 mental health scale, and their link to individual work and care patterns across the transition to parenthood.

Preliminary results reveal distinct gendered trajectories: mothers experience an anticipation effect prior to childbirth followed by a marked decline in well-being afterwards, while fathers show only a mild and often statistically insignificant decrease across the observation period. Increases in unpaid care work are associated with steeper declines in mothers' well-being, while no consistent effects emerge for fathers. These findings suggest that unpaid care work moderates, rather than mediates, the relationship between parenthood and well-being, with effects contingent on gender and timing.

Future analyses will distinguish between types of care work, such as childcare and household chores, and incorporate total workload including paid employment. By linking parental well-being to patterns of paid and unpaid work, this study advances understanding of how gendered work-family arrangements shape the experience of parenthood and generate enduring differences in well-being.

Caring for summer? Seasonality of Fathers' Paternity Leave Take-Up in Germany (Andreas Filser, Ann-Christin Bächmann & Corinna Frodermann)

Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Nuremberg, Germany

Encouraging fathers to take parental leave is crucial for promoting gender equality. Germany's 2007 parental leave reform introduced a "daddy quota," reserving two months of paid leave for fathers. Following the reform, an increasing share of fathers claims leave, yet findings on the effects on fathers' contributions to childcare remain inconclusive. This paper examines how fathers use their parental leave entitlement, by focusing on the seasonality of leave-taking. Paternal leave predominantly taken in summer may indicate leisure preferences influencing decisions, especially when parents take leave simultaneously. Our analysis draws on a new dataset from the Integrated Employment Biographies (IEB), which includes daily employment records for 161,587 married couples who became first-time parents between 2007 and 2013. We use linear probability models with person fixed effects to analyze the timing of parental leave, adjusting for the time elapsed since childbirth. Preliminary findings indicate that fathers are more likely to take leave during the summer months, particularly in June, July, and August. This pattern is more pronounced among fathers who take only the two-months-minimum leave necessary to claim the leave benefits and among fathers with tertiary education. Future analyses will include additional couple-level information, such as whether the mother was also on parental leave, as well as pre-birth education, income, and occupational characteristics of both parents. The seasonality in paternal leave take-up may suggest that some fathers use their leave for activities unrelated to childcare with important implications for the effectiveness of paternal leave benefits in promoting gender balance in care work.

Who cares for a sick child? The role of job characteristics in Germany (Anna Lotte Klennert, Ayhan Adams & Katrin Golsch)

Universität Osnabrück

This work examines how job characteristics determine the couple's division of sick child care. Thus far, research on the gendered division of domestic labour has predominantly focused on steady parenting chores (cf. Steinbach & Schulz 2022). Here, caring for a sick child is unique as it is both common and unpredictable. Furthermore, it can be emotionally taxing, cannot be deferred, and typically requires direct involvement from parents. The gender division of sick child care, therefore, highlights a relevant gap in the research. From a resource perspective, job characteristics can make it easier or harder to take on caregiving responsibilities. Therefore, the question arises as to whether and which characteristics influence how care for a sick child is distributed in two-parent households. Using dyadic survey data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (2010–2022), OLS and fixed-effects regression analyses examine how job

characteristics shape mothers' relative share of absence days for sick child care. OLS models link mothers' income and working hours to lower shares, and fathers' income and working hours to higher shares. Fixed effects, however, point only to a negative association of fathers' income. Overall, the results indicate that between-couple differences and within-couple changes can yield different conclusions about how job characteristics relate to the division of sick child care.

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Take it or leave it? Factors for fathers' parental leave take-up in Germany **(Ann-Christin Bächmann, Corinna Frodermann & Andreas Filser)**

Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Nuremberg, Germany

In 2007, Germany introduced incentives for fathers to increasing fathers' involvement in childcare and reduce parenthood-related gender inequalities. Yet, more than half of all fathers do not claim any parental allowance and if they do, three quarters only take the minimum of two months. Previous research on this hesitancy in fathers' parental leave take-up has been limited in scope, lacking longitudinal pre-birth information, or neglecting partner characteristics, including whether paternal leave was concurrent with the partner's leave. Our study circumvents these limitations by utilizing the Integrated Employment Biographies (IEB) which contain the complete employment biography for both partners of 114,392 married heterosexual couples who were employed subject to social security and became parents in 2007-2013. This data allows for exploring individual-, couple-, and context-level factors for paternal leave take-up, its duration, and the share of solo leave time taken while the partner was actively employed. Preliminary results suggest that fathers are more likely to take parental leave if their spouse has a tertiary degree, yet educational differences are largely insignificant for the overall duration and the solo leave time. With respect to income, fathers' parental leave take-up, duration, and solo leave time diverge by the share of income earned by the wife in high-income household, while no differences between income constellations emerge for low household incomes. On the context level, East German fathers are more likely to take parental leave and take more solo leave time than West German fathers, but overall leave duration is similar between both regions.

Session 2B: Mental Health and Stress

Chair: *Eva-Maria Schmidt*

Room: K2

Mental Health in Adulthood after Prenatal Exposure to Maternal Stress due to Sudden Loss of Close Relatives (Yael A. Broos, Thijs van den Broek & Anna P. Nieboer)

Department of Socio-Medical Sciences, Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands

Background

Losses of close relatives have a well-documented impact on the mental health of those left behind. Maternal losses during pregnancy have similarly been linked to poorer mental health in offspring, yet causal evidence on in-utero effects remains limited. Since both exposure and outcomes follow a social gradient, previous findings may partly reflect social differences rather than true effects. Our study accounts for these factors to provide new causal evidence on the long-term mental health consequences for offspring of maternal loss during pregnancy.

Methods

We exploit the random timing of sudden maternal losses of close relatives within a time frame around births as an exogenous source of maternal stress to estimate its impact on offsprings' later-life mental health. Using Norwegian population registers covering births from 1960-2003, we compare mental health care use of children exposed to maternal loss in utero to those exposed shortly after birth.

Results

Offspring exposed in utero has an raised probability of using mental health care in later life of 1.08 percentage point, compared to those exposed post birth. We observed adverse mental health outcomes in those exposed in utero if the maternal loss occurred in the first (1.69 percentage point) or last trimester (1.80 percentage point), but not in the second trimester.

Conclusion

Our findings highlight that maternal distress during pregnancy has long-term implications for offspring mental health. Increased attention for maternal mental health concerns is therefore crucial to prevent effects from spanning generations and to help reduce health disparities associated with social inequalities.

Do I care? Maternal self-care during the COVID-19 pandemic in Austria (Vera Dafert)

University of Vienna, Department of Sociology

During the COVID-19 pandemic, mothers faced high demands and often role overload, fuelled by feelings of uncertainty, by a strong sense of responsibility, and often accompanied by a guilty conscience. At the same time, opportunities for time off and for practices of self-care or balance were limited due to the pandemic. To understand how mothers experience and manage self-care during times of high stress while caring for other family members, it is essential to explicate how mothers created time for themselves during the pandemic, how they used these scarce time resources, and which challenges they faced.

Theoretically based on family stress theory and the concept of family resilience, this contribution relies on an Austrian qualitative longitudinal study with a subsample of 84 mothers of kindergarten-or school-aged children. Respondents were surveyed repeatedly (12 waves of data collection) over a 2-year period (March 2020 to June 2022), using problem-centered telephone interviews and diary entries. Data analysis is based on the grounded theory coding scheme.

Results show that established self-care routines were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mothers were challenged to create new self-care routines despite limited time and fast changing pandemic conditions that required constant (re-)organization of everyday family life. Mothers prioritized the well-being of their family members over their own, which affected their self-care practices. Four distinct types of maternal self-care during the COVID-19 pandemic could be identified: devoters, squeezers, combiners, and neglecters. Over time, these self-care types proved to be relatively stable, with changes occurring only at turning points (e.g., lockdowns, divorce, or job loss). To conclude, I point out the importance of self-care practices in promoting resilience in mothers and their families, and the significant role that mothers play in fostering family resilience.

Disappointed believers suffer more: How Marriage Permanence Beliefs Shape Depressive Symptoms after Separation and Divorce (Marie-Fleur Philipp, Janna Wilhelm & Pia Schober)

University of Tübingen

International research has shown that separation and divorce have negative consequences for individuals' wellbeing, e.g., in terms of lower life satisfaction, loneliness and depressive symptoms. At the same time, empirical evidence shows that individuals vary in the meanings and importance they attach to partnerships and marriage and their views regarding divorce. In the context of the (partial) deinstitutionalization of marriage but a persistently strong couple norm, the present study aims to investigate whether the detrimental impact of union dissolution on depressive symptoms depends on individuals' beliefs regarding marriage and divorce. Crisis and resource models argue that union dissolution is emotionally straining, brings stressful practical

changes and reduces economic and social resources, resulting in lower wellbeing. Normative marriage beliefs serve as a perceptual lense through which individuals interpret the situation of union dissolution. We therefore argue that separation and divorce might be experienced less negatively by individuals who do not strongly believe in the lifetime duration of marriage. Earlier cross-sectional US studies from the 1990s show that individuals' levels of distress following divorce indeed depended on their normative beliefs. We provide a longitudinal perspective with more recent data from Germany and go beyond marital dissolutions by also including dissolutions of LAT-relationships and nonmarital cohabitations. Our empirical analysis draws on data from the German family panel pairfam (2008-2021). The sample includes 8,271 respondents. Fixed-effects panel regression models show that union dissolution is accompanied by increased depressive symptoms, most strongly after divorce. In line with our argument, particularly those who strongly believe in the permanence of marriage show higher depressive symptoms following LAT and marriage dissolutions. Subgroup analyses suggest that this pattern is driven by men. Overall, our results suggest that the negative consequences of divorce on wellbeing might be diminished in more liberal contexts and with the further liberalization of marriage beliefs in Germany

Unequal Happiness Gains from Summer Breaks: Evidence from European Parents (Valentina Rotondi)

Department of Business, Economics, Health and Social Care, SUPSI; Nuffield College, University of Oxford

Do summer school breaks lift adults' happiness equally, or do caregiving roles mute the seasonal boost? We study this question using harmonized microdata from the European Social Survey (ESS, 2023-2025) for 16 countries linked to country-specific school calendars from Eurydice. Exploiting the quasi-random timing of interviews within national fieldwork windows, we estimate how the probability of reporting being (very) happy changes when respondents are interviewed during their country's summer school closure, and how this association varies by parental status, gender, and the length of the break.

Three results emerge. First, childless men experience a clear summer uplift in happiness across contexts. Second, mothers exhibit a substantially smaller—and in long-break countries often nonexistent—summer gain. Fathers show a dip in short-break settings and a partial recovery where breaks are medium or long. Childless women display heterogeneous, context-sensitive patterns. Third, replacing the binary summer indicator with days since break start reveals a modest within-summer decline in happiness, offset only in part by later-summer adjustments among parents, with net penalties concentrated among mothers in medium- and long-break regimes.

These findings are robust to alternative functional forms (ordered models), richer seasonality controls (country-by-year and country-by-month trends), alternative codings of parenthood (number of children), and placebo checks (older samples and immutable outcomes). Results also

hold when conditioning on household structure, division of domestic work among partnered respondents, and the presence of co-residing grandparents.

Our evidence highlights a pronounced gender asymmetry in how institutional time structures shape subjective well-being. By foregrounding parents' experiences—rather than children's outcomes alone—this study underscores the spillovers of school calendars onto adult happiness. Policy discussions on calendar reform and gender equity should consider expanding accessible, affordable summer childcare and flexible leave options, particularly in countries with long closures, to reduce well-being disparities without sacrificing children's learning opportunities.

Session 2C: Wealth and Property

Chair: Bettina Hünteler

Room: K3

Family and Reproductive Welfare Across Europe (Rohan Khan¹ & Hannah Zagel²)

1WZB Berlin Social Science Center 2TU Dortmund University

This paper investigates how configurations of family policy and reproduction policy affect the wellbeing of individuals in different living arrangements. Family research has extensively studied how family policies shape social, economic and demographic outcomes, but has paid less attention to the impact of reproduction policies. Reproduction policies, such as contraception and abortion regulations, affect people's ability to decide freely about whether, when and how they procreate. It is crucial to understand potential effects of these policies not only due to mounting threats to reproductive rights in European countries, but also considering policymakers' strong interest in using family policy to help pronatalist goals in contexts of demographic decline.

We draw on the concepts of defamilisation and repro-liberalisation to derive expectations about the combined effects of family policy and reproduction policy on individual health outcomes, and suggest that country contexts can be described in four ideal-types, depending on their level of (a) defamilisation and (b) repro-liberalisation respectively: repro-liberal individualism (high/high), repronormative individualism (high/low), family-centred repro-liberalism (low/high) and repronormativism (low/low). In terms of outcomes, we expect that women's health is highest and health gaps between individuals in different living arrangements are lowest in countries with repro-liberal individualism. We also expect the highest health penalties and inequalities in contexts of repronormativism, in which policies are built on the assumption that procreation and family formation are inevitable natural-biological processes and dependencies between family members are not decreased.

Empirically, we first investigate 28 European countries' adherence to the four ideal-types using a range of policy indicators for defamilisation (parental leave, childcare) and repro-liberalism (contraception, abortion and pregnancy care) drawing on our novel International Reproduction Policy Database among other data sources. Second, using European Social Survey (ESS) data and multilevel regression models, we examine how family/reproduction policy configurations affect wellbeing, focusing on health outcomes of women in different age groups and across living arrangements (singles, childless couples, single/couple families).

Wealthy families in the D-A-CH-Region: Wealth formation and transfer between tradition and renewal (Benjamin Neumann & Marliese Weißmann) - *cancelled*

TU Dortmund University and SOFI Göttingen

Only recently has sociological research on wealthy families gained momentum. Studies on affluent families address significant research gaps concerning inequality relations within and between families, which are also closely linked to recent socio-political discourses surrounding unequal wealth distributions. A sociologically relevant approach appears to be one that does not merely reduce the emergence and transfer of wealth to its economic dimension but understands familial relationships as relational practices that must be examined beyond established stereotypes about the wealthy. Furthermore, current studies predominantly focus on so-called Ultra-High-Net-Worth Individuals (UHNWI), while small-per affluent groups have been scarcely researched.

In our ongoing research project 'Wealth as a Social Relationship: Intergenerational Aspects of the Familial (Re)Production of Wealth' (2023-2026) at TU Dortmund University and SOFI Göttingen, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, we investigate these and other aspects through multi-generational individual and family interviews. A central focus here is on the aforementioned 'small' wealthy individuals.

The talk discusses the complex tensions that become apparent in the context of wealth creation and transfers. It focuses on the relationship between freedoms and burdens faced subjectively by individual family members, which must also be considered within a broader inter- and intragenerational context. Biographically, it becomes evident e.g., how decisions made by parents or individual siblings can significantly impact the life paths and opportunities of other family members. On the other hand, these subjective freedoms and burdens exist in a reciprocal relationship with various modes of transferring shares of wealth that oscillate between mandatory obligations and voluntarily open practices of transfer, thereby regulating the specific relationship between freedom and burden. The creation and transfer of wealth thus becomes apparent as an inseparable intersection of doing family and doing wealth.

Social and Material Participation of Children in Low-Income Households in Germany – a Mixed-Methods Research Project (Claudia Globisch & Claudia Wenzig)

Institute for Employment Research (Nuremberg)

In Germany, around 20 percent of children under 18 are at risk of income poverty, and 14 percent receive welfare benefits. Growing up in low-income families negatively impacts living conditions and child development. The national action plan aims to enable material and social child participation by 2030.

Our mixed-methods project examines the participation and living standards of these children and their families. We analyze household resource allocation, decision-making processes, and age-specific needs. By combining quantitative and qualitative data at two time points, we track changes over time. This methodological approach provides both representative findings and in-depth insights into families' experiences and coping strategies. We focus on children's perspectives in their family context and use participatory research elements.

The study is based on a web survey within the panel study "Labour Market and Social Security" (PASS), involving around 5,000 respondents. From this sample, about 20 families were selected for narrative interviews. Additionally, 10 expert interviews will be conducted with representatives from politics, administration, welfare, and youth. Our focus is on children's material and social participation in low-income households, household resource distribution and living standard assessments, particularly for children.

In our presentation, we will introduce the study design and research questions of our mixed-method-project. As an introduction we will present empirical findings on child poverty risks and their consequences based on the representative PASS study. We will particularly highlight the material living conditions of income-poor children and their families as a starting point of our research project. We will conclude our presentation with first qualitative and quantitative insights into social participation of children gained so far within our ongoing mixed-method project.

Forgotten Property – Operationalizing Couple-Specific Property Arrangements for Standardized Surveys (Thomas Eichhorn, Kathrin Leuze, Robin Saalfeld, Sylka Scholz & Janina Wollmann)

Friedrich Schiller University Jena

This paper presents the initial step in the operationalization of property arrangements for standardized surveys.

Property is defined as the regulated power of disposal by property subjects – two partners living in a shared household – over property objects such as earned income, assets, debts, inheritances, or gifts contributed to the household. Central to this concept is not only the distribution of property between partners but also the practices and interpretive patterns they establish to enable or restrict access. The result of this doing property process are couple-specific property arrangements.

Most quantitative research on property arrangements or property control focuses on couples' money management (e.g., Althaber et al., 2023; Lott, 2009, 2017). Some studies employ vignette

designs to examine perceptions of fairness in income (Pepin, 2019), wealth (Tisch & Lersch, 2021), or gift management (Tisch & Gutfleisch, 2023). However, a comprehensive operationalization of property arrangements and control has yet to be developed, requiring new item construction.

Based on 47 couple interviews, Saalfeld (2025) identified six exploratory types of property arrangements: (a) investment-oriented couples; (b) collective security-oriented couples; (c) individualized security-oriented couples; (d) consumption-oriented couples; (e) consumption-critical couples; and (f) collective subsistence-oriented couples. These types are structured along five comparative dimensions: property portfolio, ownership mode, investment behavior, consumption behavior, handling of debts.

Building on this typology, we examine the quantitative validity and representativeness of these six property types. Using Saalfeld (2025) dimensions, we developed standardized items following guidelines by Boateng et al. (2018), Clark and Watson (2019), and Morgado et al. (2017). Construct domains were defined, an item pool was generated, and content-validity assessed by experts in the field of property research before pretesting on a convenience sample. We will present the finalized item pool and the results of the pretest.

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Postersession: Families' diversity

Room: XXX

From Separate to Shared: Marriage Beliefs, Homeownership, and Couples' Money Management (Agnieszka Althaber & Marie-Fleur Philipp)

LMU München & Universität Tübingen

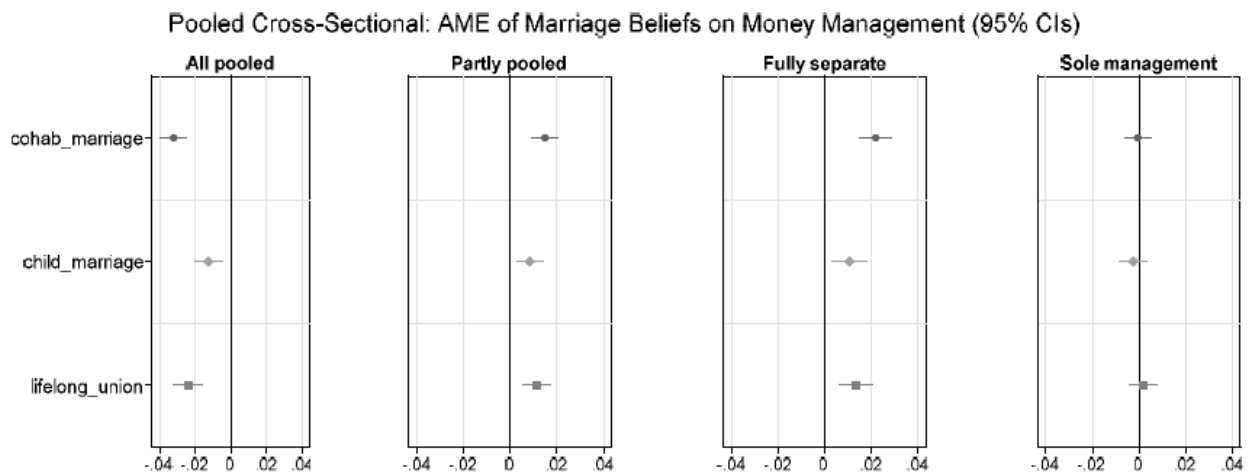
As separate money management becomes more common in the course of the Second Demographic Transition, the gender revolution, the diversification of family forms, and rising labour market insecurities, scholars increasingly debate how couples reconcile the competing cultural values of autonomy and sharing in intimate partnerships, as well as the role of property relations in structuring couples' financial arrangements. However, most existing evidence is cross-sectional or based on vignette studies. Our contribution examines how normative beliefs about marriage—understood as expectations about long-term commitment—and the material commitments of joint homeownership shape couples' money management. We combine cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses to capture both overall associations and within-person changes over time.

Building on exchange-theoretical perspectives on intrahousehold distribution, we hypothesize that traditional marriage beliefs will foster joint money management, whereas non-traditional beliefs facilitate separation. However, joint homeownership should constitute a more robust institutional anchor for joint management and transitions toward it.

Using data from the German Family Panel (pairfam, 2008–2022), we estimate cross-sectional logistic regressions for the full range of practices among partnered individuals, i.e. joint (fully pooled), partially pooled, fully separate, and sole management by one partner. Longitudinal fixed-effects models are then applied to analyze within-person change, focusing on transitions from fully separate to joint management as one of the most frequent changes in couples' financial organization. Key explanatory factors are three standardized marriage belief scales capturing traditional vs. liberal commitment norms and timing expectations, and longitudinally updated measures of homeownership (none, individual, joint).

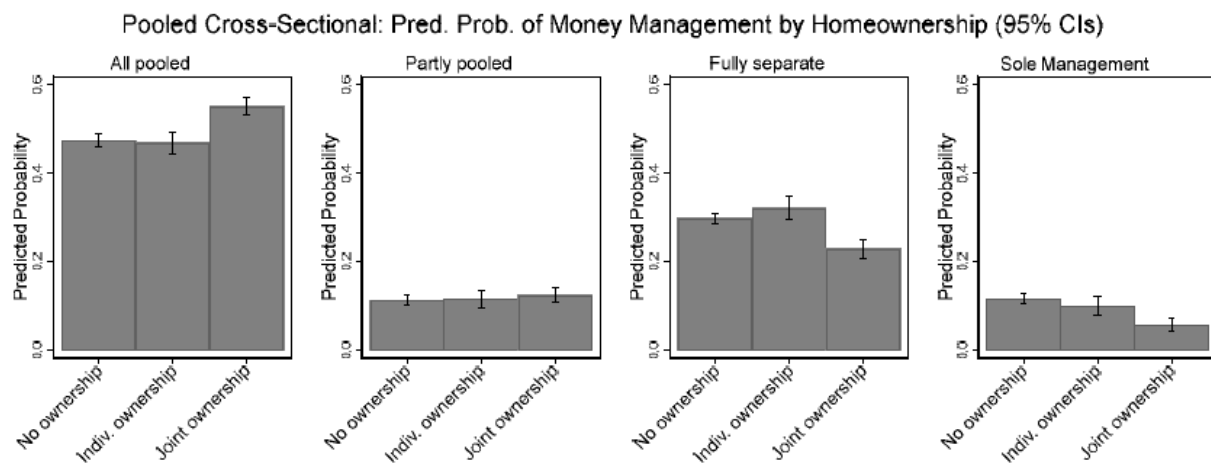
Our results show that marriage beliefs are only weakly associated with managing all money jointly once unobserved heterogeneity and life-course events are accounted for. By contrast, joint homeownership consistently predicts a shift toward joint management, underscoring that property relations provide a stronger institutional anchor of financial collectivization than normative orientations alone.

Figure 1:



Notes: Logistic regression models, calibrated design weights used. All models include controls for homeownership, cohabitation, marriage, parenthood, East/West, age, age2, gender, education, employment status, household income. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Figure 2:



Notes: Logistic regression models, calibrated design weights used. All models include controls for marriage belief (marriage when cohabiting), cohabitation, marriage, parenthood, East/West, age, age2, gender, education, employment status, household income. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 1. Fixed-effects estimates of the transition from separate to joint money management, belief “cohabitation should lead to marriage”, robustness with life course events

Predictor	M4 (M1 + Cohabitation)	M5 (M1 + Marriage)	M6 (M1 + Parenthood)
Marriage belief: Marriage when cohabiting	0.02	0.02*	0.02
Homeownership: none	ref.	ref.	ref.
Homeownership: individual	0.17*	0.11	0.12
Homeownership: joint	0.34***	0.21***	0.26***
Cohabitation	0.18***	–	–
Marriage	–	0.46***	–
Parenthood	–	–	0.36***
Controls	yes	yes	yes
Constant	-0.34*	-0.29**	-0.28*
N (person-waves)	2,450	2,450	2,450
Individuals	973	973	973

Notes: Fixed-effects linear probability models, calibrated design weights used. All models include controls for employment status and household income. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Non-commercial Surrogacy. An international qualitative interview study (Lea Heistrüvers)

University Zürich, Institute of Biomedical Ethics and History of Medicine, H2R Human
Reproduction Reloaded

Surrogacy is often publicly, politically as well as ethically discussed and an ongoing topic of debate in many countries. Within the D-A-CH region surrogacy is frequently addressed. The current efforts to revise regulations concerning egg donation within Switzerland, might reignite the surrogacy-debate. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights prohibits in § 3. 2. c) “making the human body and its parts as such a source of financial gain”¹, thus only making non-commercial surrogacy arrangements possible within the EU. Hence my project exclusively examines non-commercial surrogacy arrangements, in which the surrogate does not receive financial reimbursement for carrying and giving birth to a child. This raises the question, what factors and personal values play into the motivation to carry a child for others without the often-discussed financial incentive. Furthermore, it invites to evaluate, if the regularly used term “altruistic surrogacy” conceptually fits this reproductive practice.

This study contributes to the limited body of international qualitative research on non-commercial surrogacy²³⁴⁵. Through conducting 19 in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews across five countries⁶, this project gathered perspectives, self-description and the motivation of non-commercial surrogates. It was enriched by a high degree of internationality and a broad range of surrogacy journey constellations.

Within the study participants describe national and transnational, as well as gestational, traditional and donor involved surrogacy journeys. The interviews explored five central themes: the experience of being a surrogate, the motivations underlying the decision to become a surrogate, the participants' self-perceptions, their current relationship with the intended parent, notion of altruism and reflection on their own journey.

1 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Dignity, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/eu-charter/article/3-right-integrity-person>

2 Yee et al., "Not my child to give away": A qualitative analysis of gestational surrogates' experiences, 2019, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30824376/> Hibino, Non-commercial Surrogacy in Thailand: Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications in Local and Global

3 Jadva et al., Surrogacy: the experiences of surrogate mothers, 2003, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14507844/>

4 Imrie and Jadva, The long-term experiences of surrogates: relationships and contact with surrogacy families in genetic and gestational surrogacy arrangements, 2014, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25131555/>

5 Hibino, Non-commercial surrogacy among close relatives in Vietnam: policy and ethical implication, 2018, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29671648/>

6 US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand

Queer Family Formation in Germany: Acceptance of Egg Donation for Female Same-Sex Couples (Tabea Naujoks^{1, 2} & Anne-Kristin Kuhnt¹)

1 University of Rostock, 2 Hertie School

In recent years, the number of same-sex couple households in Germany has steadily increased, reaching almost 207000 in 2024 (Destatis, 2025). At the same time, medically assisted reproduction has become a potential pathway to parenthood for both different-sex and same-sex couples. Yet access to and financial support for medically assisted reproduction, as well as the legal recognition of family formation, differ markedly between couple types in Germany: Sperm donation is permitted, whereas egg donation remains prohibited under the Embryo Protection Act (§1 Abs. 1 ESchG), creating a gendered imbalance in access to reproductive medicine that restricts female same-sex couples' options for family formation but also disadvantages different-sex couples when the woman is infertile. Female same-sex couples, for example, who depend on donor sperm, face additional financial and legal barriers compared to different-sex couples. Moreover, the reciprocal in vitro fertilization (ROPA1) method is also banned. Furthermore, in married same-sex couples, the partner of the biological mother is not automatically acknowledged as the second parent, unlike in opposite-sex couples, where the husband is automatically the father. Easing current restrictions on egg donation could thus increase reproductive options for both same-sex and different-sex couples. Therefore, this study investigates whether public attitudes toward egg donation differ depending on the family form

of potential recipients. Using data from an online survey of 1,000 respondents conducted in October 2025, we examine societal acceptance of egg donation and its potential use among different-sex couples and female same-sex couples using the ROPA method within their partnerships. We further analyze how acceptance varies by gender, age, education, migrant status, religiosity, and family status. In this way, our study contributes new insights into the debate about the public's support for reproductive technologies and the social legitimacy of queer parenthood in Germany.

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What should children know about families? Primary school children's views on family diversity (Ulrike Zartler, Lena Grabner, Daniela Schimek & Sabine Erben-Harter)

University of Vienna, Department of Sociology

Contemporary families are complex and diverse in many aspects (e.g., family structures, gender roles, everyday family lives, economic situation, geographic aspects). To date, scholarly knowledge about how children conceptualize family diversity is limited. However, understanding children's perspectives is relevant both for the social sciences and for the educational arena, as schools are tasked with incorporating these topics into their curricula. Accordingly, this contribution crosses disciplinary boundaries to provide insights into the attitudes, values and meaning-making of primary school children regarding families. We focus on children's perspectives on what is essential to know about families.

This contribution is based on participatory research with 87 children in primary schools, aged 8 to 11. We conducted 24 research workshops in six different classes in an urban and a rural Austrian region, focusing on children's views on families and their diversity. A wide variety of methodical approaches were used, including focus groups, Concept Cartoon discussions, the collection and analysis of artefacts, and research diaries. The verbal data were transcribed and subjected to a thematic analysis. The children's accounts will inform the development of easy-to-use materials for educational use.

First results show that the main topics that children consider important for discussion when teaching children about families are: (1) family values, (2) the meaning of families, (3) family belonging, (4) family structure, (5) roles in families, (6) feelings in families, (7) cultural diversity, (8) economic diversity, (9) changes and transitions, and (10) arguments and violence. We conclude that children's ideas about families are manifold, differentiated, and often surprising. We will

discuss the impact of the participants' accounts on sociological research, and the transferability of their perspectives into didactic concepts.

Preparing for worst: Marriage Insurance and Labour Supply (Sehrish Usman)

University of Mannheim, Germany

I study how weakening “marriage insurance” affects women’s labor supply. Using household marital histories and exploiting the 2008 German alimony reform - which reduced post-divorce transfers—as a natural experiment, I find that employment among married women most affected by the reform rose by 5.4 percentage points. The response is concentrated among women facing higher risk of divorce and does not vary with household decision-making structures. These findings indicate that women adjust labor supply primarily through precautionary self-insurance rather than shifts in intra-household bargaining power when legal financial protection within marriage declines. However, despite increased labour participation, these women do not proportionally reduce household chores, potentially exacerbating existing gender asymmetries in household time allocation. The extent of these responses varies significantly between different age groups, family structures, duration of relationships, and income levels. These findings underscore the importance of understanding intra-household economic decisions and suggest that legal frameworks can play a significant role in shaping household dynamics and influencing broader trends in women’s labour force participation.

The Politics of Parenthood: How Family Roles Shape Support for Equal-Opportunity Education Policy (Meret Lütolf & Flavia Fossati)

University of Lausanne/LIVES

Public support is a key determinant of whether education reforms aiming to foster equal opportunities for disadvantaged or immigrant students succeed or face backlash.

Parents are often at the center of such debates, both as direct stakeholders and as political actors. Yet, their preferences have rarely been systematically compared to those of non-parents. This paper investigates how parental status shapes attitudes toward equal-opportunity education policies in Switzerland and asks: Do parents, compared to non-parents, express distinct preferences toward redistributive or integrative policies? How are these attitudes conditioned by socio-economic status, political orientation and contextual factors such as cantonal education systems?

The paper pays particular attention to the diversity of parents' preferences. Drawing on theories of self-interest and value orientations, it argues that attitudes depend on both perceived consequences for one's own children and broader views of fairness. Low-SES parents are expected to show stronger support for inclusive or redistributive measures, whereas high-SES parents may resist reforms that could reduce their children's relative advantage. Left-leaning or equality-oriented parents may also face a tension between safeguarding their offspring's interests and endorsing egalitarian ideals.

Using novel survey-experimental data from four Swiss cantons with differing institutional settings, the paper compares support for specific policies, such as abolishing early tracking, introducing free childcare, or adopting integrated schooling models. It examines to what extent observed differences can be explained by distributive concerns (e.g., perceived costs and benefits for one's family), value orientations (e.g., universalism versus meritocracy), and contextual factors (e.g., cantonal policy environments).

The paper contributes to understanding the social and value-based cleavages underlying education policy preferences in multicultural societies. More broadly, it highlights how parenthood shapes citizens' conceptions of fairness, equality, and the role of the state in providing opportunities for all children – thereby linking research on family, social inequality, and the politics of education.

Session 3A: Partnership and Migration

Chair: Eva-Maria Schmidt

Room: K1

Partnership trajectories among refugee women and men: Exploring the role of gender and country of origin (Elisabeth K. Kraus & Nadja Milewski)

Federal Institute for Population Research, Germany

This paper explores union formation patterns among refugees in European destination countries. We pay special attention to the comparison between women and men and the role that other family members play in union formation processes. Theoretical considerations are derived from frameworks on union formation in migrant groups. Empirically, we focus on individuals from Eritrea and Syria in Germany. Specifically, we draw on original data from the quantitative survey Forced Migration and Transnational Family Arrangements – Eritrean and Syrian Refugees in Germany (TransFAR), collected in 2020. This survey, with approximately 1,450 completed interviews (half Eritrean/half Syrian, half women/half men), is nationally representative of recent refugees from two major countries of origin of forced migrants to Germany.

Our analytical strategy is threefold: First, we describe the patterns of union formation from five years before arrival in Germany to five years after arrival using sequence analysis techniques. Second, for those who arrived as single, we carry out Kaplan-Meier estimates and multivariable event-history analyses on the transitions to a first union after arriving in Germany. Third, we study the characteristics of the partner (i.e., co-ethnic or not; residing in Germany or elsewhere).

Our results show important gender differences in the timing of union formation, with women experiencing faster transitions, while overall union formation rates are rather low. Furthermore, women of both origins form new unions almost exclusively with co-ethnics residing in Germany, while men also start interethnic relationships with partners in Germany or co-ethnic relationships with partners residing outside Germany.

Mixed Unions as Boundary Breakers? How Choosing Migrant Partners Affects German Non-Migrants' Family Ties (Annegret Gawron & Heike Trappe)

University of Rostock

This study examines how entering a mixed union with a migrant (or migrant descendant) partner, compared to an endogamous co-ethnic union, affects conflicts with parents among non-migrants (i.e., natives). Theoretical assumptions propose several mechanisms: mixed unions may be linked

to strained parental ties due to higher conflict levels pre-union formation. In addition to such selection effects, conflicts may increase post-union as parents prefer endogamy. Alternatively, conflicts could decrease with increasing partnership institutionalization, as mixed unions provide opportunities for intergroup contact, potentially reducing conflicts and prejudice over time. Using pairfam data (waves 1–13), we explore the relationship between conflicts with mothers and fathers of German non-migrants in mixed unions compared to endogamous unions, across different partnership phases—ranging from singlehood to dating, cohabitation, marriage, and parenthood. After observing that German non-migrants had higher conflict levels with mothers and fathers even pre-union formation, we use distributed fixed-effects models to investigate post-union formation associations while controlling for the observed selection effect. These analyses reveal that mixed unions are associated with increased conflicts with fathers shortly after union formation (dating) and in highly institutionalized phases (parenthood), while there is no significant effect on conflicts with mothers. However, the results vary by context: parental conflicts are more likely in East Germany, highlighting the importance of macro-level factors such as migration history, the proportion of the migrant population, and the majority group's attitudes toward migrants. Thus, both individual and contextual factors must be considered to fully understand the impact of mixed unions on intergenerational ties.

Navigating norms: How mothers in transnational child custody conflicts negotiate normative ideals about motherhood (Johanna Kiermaier, Agnes Dürr & Ulrike Zartler)

University of Vienna, Department of Sociology

In child custody conflicts, normative ideals of motherhood play a central role. In Austria, as in many societies of the Global North, these ideals are informed by conservative, heteronormative and neoliberal notions of the nuclear family which frame motherhood as an individual responsibility within familialist policies. Child custody conflicts are particularly frequent and intense when it comes to transnational separations or divorces. However, to date, little is known about how mothers in these situations deal with norms around motherhood. We address this research gap by examining how these mothers negotiate normative ideals of motherhood, and what motivates and constrains their negotiations. Theoretically based on the concept of normology (Morris et al., 2015) and on a praxeological perspective (Jurczyk, 2020; Morgan, 2011), we conceptualize motherhood norms as implicit standards of desirability that mothers engage with in their everyday practices of doing, thinking and feeling. We also aim at capturing intersecting structures of inequality (Fresnoza-Flot & de Hart, 2022).

The analysis draws on 16 problem-centered interviews with mothers in transnational custody conflicts who live in Austria. Data were analyzed using the Grounded Theory coding scheme. Preliminary findings suggest that the respondents encounter context-specific normative ideals of motherhood, shaped by spatial, temporal, and cultural contexts, by legal and institutional understandings of motherhood, and by their socialization in different national settings. Mothers negotiate these ideals through practices of alignment, reinterpretation, and rejection. Their

negotiations are shaped by two interrelated dimensions: first, the presence and perceived power of institutional actors such as courts, child welfare services, and migration authorities; and second, mothers' unequal access to socio-economic resources which affects how and to what extent they can align with, reinterpret, or reject normative ideals. Both dimensions are embedded in migration and gender regimes that define the normative contexts of motherhood in transnational custody conflicts.

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‘You really notice which other realities of life exist that are not foreseen’ - Legal Professionals’ Views on Transnational Families in Child Custody Conflicts (Viktoria Parisot & Ulrike Zartler)

Department of Sociology, University of Vienna

With increasing geographical mobility, transnational couples and families are on the rise, as well as transnational divorces, separations, and child custody conflicts. Legal frameworks such as the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (HCCH) play a key role in post-separation conflicts, especially when one parent wants to move across borders with a child. Based on a praxeological perspective, this study asks how legal professionals conceptualize transnational families involved in HCCH proceedings. We conducted 18 expert interviews with judges, lawyers, mediators and family counselors in Austria, and analyzed the data by means of qualitative content analysis and the Grounded Theory coding scheme.

The findings reveal two dominant narratives. First, transnational families appear as ‘Others’ (Smart 2007; Siouti et al. 2022) or as ‘Troubling families’ (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2014, 2019) who do not properly fit the categories that are set by the Austrian Law. Long distances between family members, frequent moves, cultural negotiations, and more than one country of residence are depicted as troubling aspects of transnational families. Relationships that do not correspond to traditional family norms are interpreted as difficult per se. Second, the experts refer to the Doings of transnational families. They expect them to be aware of their ‘otherness’ and to adjust their Doing Family practices appropriately. Parents are portrayed as inappropriately strategic in

navigating legal systems by exploiting their 'exceptional' situation, and as gaining advantages from their mobility between several countries and legal systems. In contrast, the interviewed experts also portray transnational families as being insufficiently informed about legal systems, and acting in clueless and naïve ways regarding their own family and legal situation. In sum, legal professionals in our sample rely on normative ideals of families that inadequately recognize the diverse realities of transnational families.

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Session 3B: Poverty and Inequality

Chair: Bernhard Riederer

Room: K2

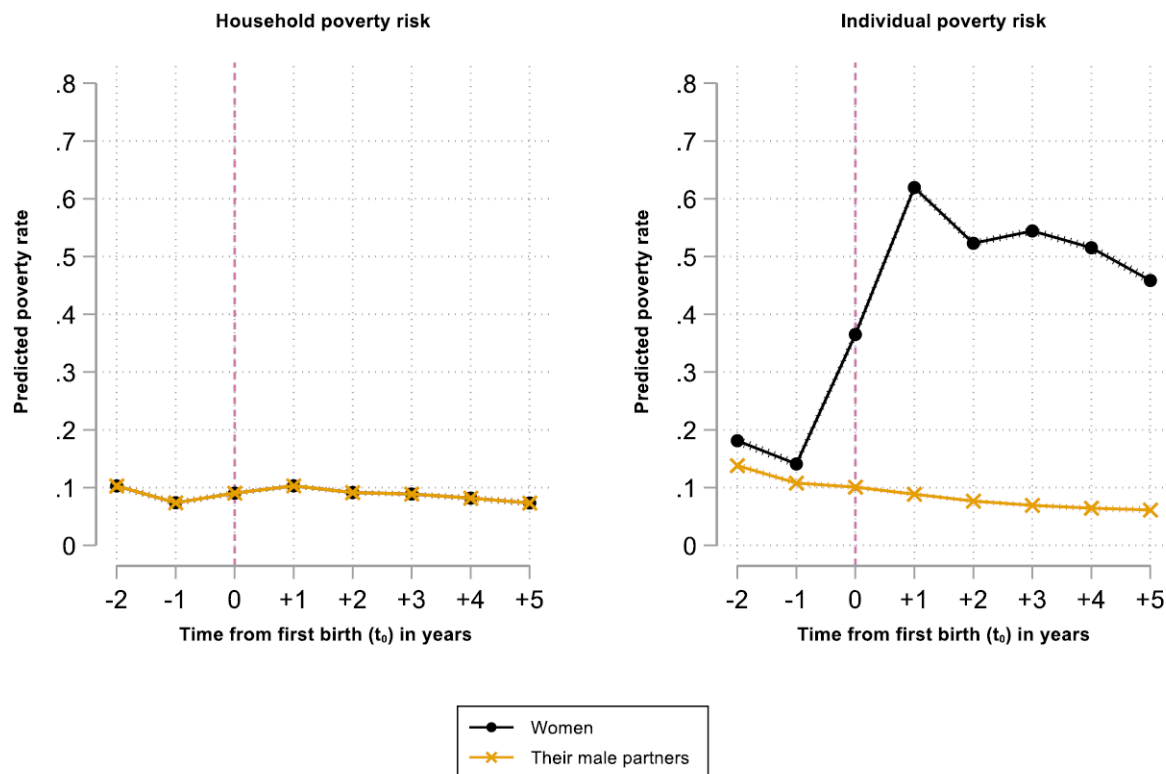
The education-specific impact of first birth on poverty risk within couples in Austria (Christina Siegert^{1,2}, Nadia Steiber^{2,3} & Laura Zilian²)

1 Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, 2 Universität Wien, 3 Institut für Höhere Studien, Wien

Typically, poverty risk is assessed at the household level, neglecting within-couple income inequality and the role of individual characteristics in vulnerability to poverty. Using Austrian register data, we track poverty dynamics within couples (N=34,546) over an 8-year period around first birth. During this phase, when income disparities between partners are typically pronounced, couples may pool resources, reducing the immediate poverty risk for the lower-earning partner. However, low personal income still leaves individuals vulnerable and exposed to social risks, particularly women. By simultaneously evaluating household and individual poverty risks (with/out access to partner income), the paper enhances our understanding of economic inequality within couples and the link between parenthood and poverty risk.

Women with different education levels diverge in their fertility behaviour and encounter distinct motherhood penalties on income, suggesting education-specific effects of first birth on poverty risk at household and individual levels. In the context of educational assortative mating, it is crucial to consider both individual education and the couple's combined educational profile. Focusing on first births to couples in 2012/2013, the analysis uses a quasi-experimental event study design to assess child penalties on poverty risk by education at the individual and household levels, from two years before to six years after birth, controlling for age trends. Preliminary results show that couples have a consistently low household poverty risk, and men's individual poverty risk trajectories are similar regardless of their own or their partner's education. In contrast, women's poverty risk rises sharply after the first birth across all education levels, with a high rate persisting even among highly educated mothers (30% at t+5), mainly due to widespread part-time work.

Figure 1. Partnered individuals at risk of household and individual poverty around first birth, by gender



Notes: Predicted probabilities with 95%-confidence intervals. Event study models with individual fixed effects, controlling for age-dummies, estimated separately by gender and unit of analysis. Source: Register data from the AMDC, first births to couples 2012–2013, N= 34,546 first-time mothers and their partners.

The social gradient in infant health from a couple-level perspective: Revisiting the heterogamy penalty hypothesis ([Sandrine Metzger¹](#), [Nadia Steiber¹](#), [Anna Baranowska-Rataj²](#) & [Laura Zilian¹](#))

Department of Sociology, University of Vienna, Austria; 2 Centre for Demographic and Ageing Research (CEDAR), Umeå University, Sweden

This study examines the consequences of educational assortative mating for infant health. Although the positive relationship between maternal education and infant health is well-established, less is known about the impact of both parents' absolute and relative education. Yet, the heterogamy penalty hypothesis suggests that couples with dissimilar educational status face greater stressors than their homogamous counterparts, potentially resulting in unequal gestational outcomes. Using Austrian birth register data (N=455,191 singleton births; n=355,119 couples), we apply Diagonal Reference Models to disentangle the independent association of educational dissimilarity from the association of parents' educational levels with infant health to test this assumption. Results indicate a large couple-level educational gradient, with substantially better birth outcomes among tertiary-educated homogamous parents, as well as a relatively

balanced contribution of maternal and paternal education in shaping infant health. While hypogamy shows no significant disadvantages for infant health, we find hypergamy to be associated with higher risks of excessive birth weight and atypical growth compared to homogamy. However, these heterogamy penalty patterns are small when compared to the pronounced couple-level gradient. Overall, this study provides new evidence on how couples' educational pairing and resources are associated with neonatal health, underscoring a potential mechanism through which family-level educational configurations contribute to health inequalities from birth onwards. Future steps in this study will include determining whether these results reflect causal effects or selection processes by using an instrumental variable design that addresses non-random, health-related selection into heterogamous unions in Austria.

I can't relate to you! Children's subjective poverty experience and their perceptions on the parent-child relationship in the German context (Annika Stein)

GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Science, Mannheim, Germany

Child poverty remains a significant structural issue in Germany, with over 2.8 million children under 18 at risk. Previous research largely examines the effects of poverty on children's behavioral and educational outcomes from a parent-focused perspective. Meanwhile, children's active roles and subjective experiences are often neglected. In my study, I hence address three research gaps. First, I take a child-oriented perspective by recognizing the active role of children in family dynamics under economic strain. Second, I focus on the quality of the parent-child relationship (PCR) as an outcome. Lastly, I consider subjective poverty experiences as the main influencing factor instead of limiting the reference frame to objective indicators.

Integrating an extended Family Stress Model with attachment theoretical thinking, I conceptualize children's subjective poverty experience as a direct and indirect predictor of both positive (intimacy, admiration) and negative (conflict, fear of love withdrawal) PCR dimensions. Further, I consider child-reports of the utilized parenting-style and the amount of time spent with the parent alongside parent-reports of psychological distress as further influencing factors. Based on baseline- and child-data from the German Family Panel (pairfam, 2010-2021), I use between-child analyses for a comparison of subjective-poverty groups while controlling for time-constant factors. To test whether changes in a child's subjective-poverty status are associated with changes in the PCR, I further conduct within-child analyses.

Preliminary results indicate that children's subjective poverty experience is particularly linked to negative aspects of the PCR, such as increased conflict and heightened fears of love withdrawal. Negative communication appears especially detrimental to the PCR when children report high levels of subjective poverty. Both the amount of time spent with the parent and the perceived parenting style consistently affect both the positive (admiration, intimacy) and negative (conflict, fear of love withdrawal) aspects of the PCR across all models.

Partnership Status and Parental Support: Evidence of Compounded Disadvantage Across European Welfare Regimes (Veronika Sofia Corradi-Eigner)

Masaryk University, Czech Republic

Access to intergenerational support represents a critical mechanism through which family resources shape inequality among adult children. While partnered individuals benefit from shared household resources and dual family networks, single adults may face compounded disadvantage when parental support is also limited. Despite growing recognition of partnership status as a stratification axis, research has largely overlooked how parental transfers interact with partnership to create compounded disadvantage.

This study examines whether access to financial, practical, and emotional support from parents varies by partnership status, and whether this pattern systematically differs across European institutional contexts. The study leverages parent-reported downward intergenerational transfers from SHARE Wave 9 (2021–2022), which collected 69,154 individual interviews in 47,957 households across 28 European countries, classified into Nordic, Continental, Mediterranean, and Eastern European transfer regimes, following Albertini & Kohli (2013). To account for within-family clustering, separate two-level logistic regression models (children nested within parents) are estimated for each transfer regime, controlling for socioeconomic, demographic, and family characteristics.

Findings are expected to show systematic disparities between single and partnered adult children across parental support dimensions, with strongest compounded disadvantage anticipated in Eastern European contexts where weak public support coincides with limited family resources. Conversely, Nordic regimes with robust welfare states may buffer against partnership-based inequalities.

Results contribute to understanding how partnership status intersects with welfare regimes to shape intergenerational solidarity and inform policy debates on defamilializing support systems, with implications for whether private safety nets reproduce or compensate for structural inequalities across European contexts.

Session 3C: Relationships in and of families

Chair: Julia Sauter

Room: K3

Digital transformation and the family: Is digital communication a benefit or a threat to parent–child relationships? (Alexandra Mellies, Mareike Reimann, Anja Abendroth & Antje Schwarz)

Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University, Germany

As part of the digital transformation, information and communication technologies and digital infrastructures increasingly enable digital communication in the work and family spheres (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2019). Within families, digital communication enables parents to maintain contact with their children and be available to them even when they are not in the same place, such as when parents are at work or children are taking part in activities outside the home. Maintaining contact and being present in each other's daily lives may then be associated with a stronger sense of closeness in the parent-child relationship. However, digital communication, be it with family members or with team members at work, may also involve new demands such as constant connectivity and superficial exchanges. Consequently, excessive use, especially at the expense of face-to-face interactions, may even endanger relationships.

Our research question is therefore whether digital communication can help to facilitate and maintain contact between family members, thereby improving the sense of closeness in the parent-child relationship, or whether a high degree of digital communication and/or a lack of face-to-face interaction might have negative impact on the parent-child relationship.

We use data from the European Social Survey Round 10, especially the module 'Digital Social Contacts in Work and Family Life' to analyse the relationship between different types of digital communication (via screen and via text) in the work and the family contexts and feelings of closeness in the parent-child relationship. Preliminary results show that using digital communication, both work- and family-related, is positively associated with the parent-child relationship. However, the results suggest that parents feel less close to children aged 12 and older when text or screen communication replaces face-to-face contact. More detailed analyses will examine differences according to the gender of the parent, occupational situations and socioeconomic backgrounds.

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Stability and Change in Sibling Relationships in Childhood: Latent Profiles and Transitions (Elena Wittmann)

Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsverläufe, Bamberg

Sibling relationships are among the most formative social bonds in childhood and adolescence, playing a crucial role in the development of individual identities and social relationships. Between closeness and conflict, support and competition, sibling relationships are characterized by ambivalent dynamics, the quality of which can change over the course of childhood and adolescence. Research on sibling relationships has repeatedly confirmed their importance, but their development over time and the underlying influencing factors remain largely unexplored. The present study addresses this gap and examines the temporal dynamics of sibling relationship quality in childhood using a person-centered approach.

Drawing on data from the German Family Panel pairfam (N = 498 children aged 8-13 years), five distinct relationship types were identified through latent profile analysis: harmonious, hostile, rivalrous, affect-intense, and distant. A subsequent latent transition analysis over a two-year period reveals that sibling relationships exhibit high stability even in childhood, particularly those characterized by positive qualities. In contrast, individual characteristics such as gender, birth order, or age gap play a minor role in predicting the stability of relationship quality.

This study makes an innovative contribution to family research by analyzing the complexity of sibling relationships not merely along individual dimensions, but as holistic relational patterns over time. It demonstrates that the quality of the relationship at the initial measurement point is a key predictor of its stability, with positive relationship patterns showing greater stability than negative ones. Methodologically, the study combines latent profile and transition analyses with regression techniques, offering a nuanced picture of the developmental trajectories of sibling relationships. It opens new perspectives for research on family dynamics and provides valuable impulses for educational and psychological practice, particularly with regard to fostering stable and supportive sibling relationships.

The Family–Childhood Nexus in Home-School-Relations (Nicoletta Eunicke)

Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany

A central response to the question of how childhood should be organised has been the introduction and enforcement of compulsory schooling. Foucault described this enforcement as a gradually established power-knowledge nexus (Foucault, 1977/2016) governing childhood. However, this power-knowledge nexus not only extends over childhood itself but also polices the family (Donzelot, 1977). The organisation of childhood is thus intrinsically linked to the regulation of the family in relation to school; together, they form what can be described as the family-childhood nexus (Eunicke, 2024).

Building on this perspective, the presentation connects a historicised view of the family-childhood nexus with current educational policy debates that aim to intensify parental engagement (Gillies, 2011; Vincent, 2017) in elementary education. Using the example of teachers' home visits, it explores how contemporary school-family relations reproduce and transform this nexus. From a childhood studies perspective, the analysis asks which positions children in elementary schools do or do not adopt regarding teachers' home visits, how these positions relate to other actors in home-school relations, and how they intersect with the broader policing of family-childhood.

The empirical basis consists of interviews with children (aged 8-9 years, $n = 18$) and school staff ($n = 8$) from five heterogeneous elementary schools in Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate (Germany). The situational analyses (Clarke, Friese & Washburn, 2018) reveal that existing orders of visibility do not necessarily correspond to the reconstructed heterogeneous positions of children. I argue that current demands for increased visibility and for 'opening up' the home and family are hierarchised in generational and institutional terms. These findings suggest that contemporary relational configurations of the family-childhood nexus must be understood through a historicising lens.

Session 4A: Norms and Emotions

Chair: Gundula Zoch

Room: K1

From Tradwives to Egalitarians: Ideologies on the Female Role and their Relevance for Political Preferences in Germany (Leonie Kleinschrot & Sabine Diabaté)

Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB). Wiesbaden, Germany

Despite long-term empirical evidence of a liberalisation of gender ideologies, right-wing populist parties and online phenomena such as “tradwives” recently are actively mobilising traditional ideals. This paper examines the current ideological spectrum on the female role in Germany and demonstrates how these orientations translate into political preferences.

Drawing on the German family demography study FReDA, latent class analyses reveal four distinct ideologies on the female role among more than 9,000 women aged 20–52. The most widespread egalitarian ideology rejects traditional concepts of the female role, supports gender equality in employment and caregiving, but does not reject marriage as an institution. The egalitarian essentialist ideology combines support for maternal employment with a residual belief in women’s greater natural competence in caregiving and housework. The stress prevention ideology does not adhere to traditional gender roles but supports a division of labour and is critical of full-time employment for both parents, reflecting a pragmatic attempt to reduce parental stress rather than a gender-specific ideal. The least common tradwife ideology places motherhood and caregiving at the core of women’s role, emphasising women’s natural aptitude and responsibility for carework.

Regression analyses reveal that ideologies on the female role are substantially correlated with party choice in the 2021 federal election. On the one hand, women holding the tradwife ideology are significantly more likely than egalitarians to abstain or to vote for right-wing parties. Thus, they feel politically represented by parties supporting traditional or even ultra-conservative family and gender models, but they might also perceive themselves as unrepresented within the current political landscape. Egalitarians – on the other hand – show the highest probability of voting for centre-left parties which focus on gender equality. The findings underline that ideological divisions regarding the female gender role constitute an important, yet often overlooked, dimension of contemporary political cleavages in Germany.

Beyond Adolescence: Exploring Value Similarities Between Parents and Adult Children (Charlotte Clara Becker)

GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

Researchers have been interested in value similarities across family members for decades, focusing specifically on the similarities between parents and their adolescent children. Adolescence, however, is a relatively short period of time strongly affected by changes and transitions; therefore, similarities observed between teenagers and their parents should not easily be assumed to persist throughout adulthood. To address this research gap, I inspected value similarities of parents and their adult children using data from multiple rounds of the German SOEP. To provide more details concerning the similarities, I inspected the similarities separately for mothers and fathers. I focused on values from three areas: material success, family life, and pro-social behavior. The preliminary results show that differences between mothers and their children, as well as fathers and their children, were the smallest for the importance of being there for others. At the same time, they were the largest in terms of the importance of having children. Overall, on average, neither parent seemed to be more similar to their child than the other. For some values, like the importance of a successful career, the differences were smaller for fathers; in others, such as the importance of owning a home, they were smaller for mothers. To provide an even wider overview, future analyses might also include intragenerational value similarities, meaning the value differences among parents and among adult siblings. Additionally, contrasting the within-family value differences with general value differences between the respective generations in society could help understand the relevance of the family for value formation.

Emotion Work in Early Motherhood: Practices and Challenges in Navigating Societal Expectations (Fabienne Décieux¹, Eva-Maria Schmidt² & Ulrike Zartler³)

¹University of Innsbruck, Department of Sociology; ²University of Vienna, Austrian Institute for Family Studies (OIF); ³Department of Sociology, University of Vienna

The talk will present findings on the question how mothers in the early phase of motherhood manage their emotions in response to their mothering practices and the strategies they employ to perform emotion work. Emotions and emotion work are deeply embedded in family life and are highly gendered, with mothers often positioned as primary caregivers. They are touched by current profound societal changes, including shifting and conflicting norms and expectations around mothering, caregiving and gender. However, the intricate relationship between mothers' emotions and their caregiving practices remains underexplored.

Drawing on a social constructivist framework combined with a praxeological perspective, this study analyzes 23 semi-structured interviews with mothers in Austria whose youngest child was under the age of two. The findings reveal two bundles of emotion work practices: (1) "changing conditions," which includes practices such as avoiding or preparing, and (2) "changing emotions," encompassing strategies like suppressing, deep acting, and toning down guilt. These practices are shaped by a fundamental feeling rule of achieving positivity, which prioritizes the child's happiness and development.

The study highlights how mothers' emotion work reflects processes of subjectivation and (gendered) responsabilization, aligning with neoliberal ideals of individual responsibility and self-regulation. By acting as invisible emotion workers, mothers bear the emotional burden of ensuring their child's well-being, often at the expense of their own emotional needs.

Our research contributes to understanding how contemporary societal dynamics, including gendered expectations and neoliberal pressures, shape family life and caregiving practices.

Becoming Parents, Becoming Egalitarian? How Couples' Gender Ideologies Shift With Parenthood in Australia, Germany and Switzerland (Christina Bornatici¹, Daniele Florean², Suri Li³, Janeen Baxter³, Daniela Grunow², Natalie Nitsche⁴)

1 FORS - Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences, Lausanne, Switzerland; 2 Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany; 3 University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia; 4 Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

Gender ideologies - individuals' beliefs about appropriate roles for women and men in paid work and family life - have long been recognised as important predictors of family and labour market outcomes. Recent research shows that partners' gender ideologies interact within couples, jointly shaping these outcomes. While growing evidence shows how couples' combined gender ideologies relate to their work arrangements, we know little about how these pairings themselves evolve over time, particularly following major transitions such as parenthood. This gap is consequential: if couples' combined gender ideologies influence their division of labour, understanding how these pairings transform around key life events is essential. This study therefore asks: How do couples' attitudinal pairings change around the birth of their first child?

Adopting a comparative and longitudinal approach, we draw on three panel datasets that repeatedly survey both partners' gender attitudes: the German Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics (pairfam), the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, and the Swiss Household Panel (SHP). These data represent diverse institutional and cultural contexts that shape both individuals' ideologies and how parenthood may alter them. Using fixed-effects panel regression models and complementary random-effects

models, we examine within- and between-couple variations in attitudinal pairings over time. We analyse how transitions to parenthood affect these pairings and whether partners' attitudes mutually converge as relationships develop and social roles might evolve.

Preliminary results indicate that, contrary to previous evidence, couples in Germany, Australia, and Switzerland tend to become more egalitarian with respect to acceptance of maternal employment after the birth of their first child, though the extent varies across countries. The attitudinal transition appears to start before childbirth, suggesting possible anticipation effects.

Session 4B: Couple Separation and Ageing

Chair: Ayhan Adams

Room: K2

Men's Employment Trajectories after Union Dissolution in Germany (Sarah Schmauk^{1,2} & Michaela Kreyenfeld^{3,2})

1 Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW), Berlin, Germany; 2 Einstein Center Population Diversity (ECPD), Berlin, Germany; 3 Hertie School, Berlin, Germany

Many studies have shown that divorce affects women's employment and economic well-being, but less is known about the impact on men's employment careers. Most studies conclude that women face greater economic consequences from divorce than men, but, on average, increase their earnings afterwards (e.g., Bröckel & Andreß, 2015). For men, the few existing studies show rather inconclusive results: while some find higher unemployment risks among divorced men, others show heterogeneous effects depending on men's pre-divorce earnings (e.g., Bonnet et al., 2021; Covizzi, 2008; Endeweld et al., 2022).

This study takes a holistic approach to men's employment trajectories in Germany—a country characterised by a strongly gendered division of labour during marriage. Two questions are central: 1) How do men's employment trajectories evolve across the divorce process in Germany? 2) Do these patterns differ between divorced and non-divorced men?

We use register data from the German Public Pension Fund to analyse the employment trajectories of men who divorced between 2008-2014 (n=7.181). We employ sequence and cluster analysis to map and categorize men's employment trajectories, which we follow from two years before to five years after divorce. Furthermore, we apply a matching procedure to construct a control group that closely aligns with the divorced men in key biographical and sociodemographic characteristics.

The results show considerable stability in men's employment trajectories around the time of divorce. Only a small fraction ends up in unstable employment trajectories. However, when comparing divorced men to their control group, the share of men who transition from low earnings to unemployment is significantly higher among the divorced than in the comparison group, while we find a smaller share of divorced men in the employment trajectory with stable and very high income. Overall, divorce seems to mainly affect men at the top and bottom of the income distribution.

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Who Converges to Whom? Divorce Patterns Across East, West, and Migrant Populations more than 30 Years after German Reunification

(Pauline Kleinschlömer & Nadja Milewski)

Federal Institute for Population Research Germany

According to the Second Demographic Transition, fertility, marriage and divorce patterns change due to increasing sexual liberalization, individualization and a decoupling of marriage and fertility (Lesthaeghe, 2014). Yet, the pace of these modernization processes may differ by social origin and institutional context. We distinguish between West and East Germans and international migrants. Before German reunification, gender roles, economic conditions, and institutional frameworks differed sharply between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) (Leitner et al., 2008; Rosenfeld et al., 2004). Reunification abruptly created a unified institutional framework. Migrants also experienced structural change across generations: first-generation migrants tend to follow marital norms of their origin countries, while second-generation migrants increasingly align with majority norms (Milewski, 2025). Thus, individualization trends may vary across subgroups in Germany and may exhibit different temporal patterns of divorce risks across cohorts. Using the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP) (Goebel et al., 2025), we analyze 14,404 couples in which women were born between 1960 and 1990, of whom 2,539 experienced a first divorce. We examine three marriage cohorts: 1976–1989 (pre-reunification), 1990–2005 (post-reunification; socialized in a divided Germany), and 2005–2020 (post-reunification; socialized in a reunified Germany). Kaplan-Meier survival analysis is employed to estimate the likelihood of divorce within 30 years of marriage. Overall, divorce risks have declined across cohorts, with the youngest cohort exhibiting markedly lower likelihoods. Over time, differences by social origin have converged: while migrants previously had lower divorce risks than couples in East and West Germany, all social origin groups in the youngest cohort now display similarly low risks. Since reunification, divorce risks of East and West Germans have remained largely similar across marriage cohorts. These findings underscore that, although social origin matters, temporal context—represented by marriage cohort—emerges as the most influential factor in determining divorce risk.

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The Timing of Labor Market Exit and Pension Claiming: The Role of Migration Status and Gender in Germany (Johanna Olga Sauer & Gundula Zoch)

Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg

While policymakers aim to raise pension ages, extending working lives is not feasible for everyone. The timing of one's retirement is largely constraint by pension regulations, but also employment opportunities and returns, as well as individual circumstances. Currently, evidence on the retirement timing for disadvantaged groups, such as migrants and women, is limited. Especially research on the retirement timing of migrants in Germany remains inconclusive, indicating mixed patterns of both early and late retirement (e.g., Buchholz et al. 2013; Schröder et al. 2020). Additionally, the intersection of gender and migration background remains poorly understood. To address these gaps, we examine how migration status and gender shape the timing of labor market exit and the start of pension claiming, while investigating the role of employment and familial characteristics as mechanisms.

According to the Life Course Theory (Elder et al. 2003) and Cumulative Disadvantage Theory (Dannefer 1987), inequalities accumulated throughout the (work-)life carry into retirement. Push Factors (see e.g., Fechter 2019) – such as labor market exclusion – are expected to send women and migrants into an earlier retirement, while Push-Factors – such as care responsibilities – are expected to especially lead women to retire earlier. Yet, based on the Life Course Cube (Bernardi et al. 2019) and the Life-Cycle Hypothesis of Savings (Ando & Modigliani 2005), those with insufficient savings for retirement – which women and migrants are more often at risk of – would be incentivized to extend their work lives.

Therefore, while we generally expect migrants and women to be pushed out of the labor market earlier, we conjecture that they might need and try to remain employed longer.

Performing survival analyses with data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), preliminary results indicate that migrants and women do retire significantly earlier than their counterparts. However, differences shrink with age and are smaller between (non-)migrant women.

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Dyadic Aging. Health, Autonomy and Death in Older Couples (Markus Klingel)

Universität Trier

Couple relationships are emotional, biographical and functional dyadic units and thus a central resource in old age. Contrary to common conceptions, however, aging couple relationships are not simply stable but have to adapt to fundamental changes. In young-old age, couples can compensate individual constraints as complementary teams. Yet, with more serious limitations

arising with old-old age, couples have to face existentially challenging questions of health, autonomy and death. This can overwhelm dyadic adaptability, even of well-functioning couples.

While in young-old age autonomy and agency are mostly still a given, in challenging old-old age, health becomes the pacemaker of the life course. Health changes make transitions necessary, such as relocating to a nursing home, and increasingly structure relationships. This is both a fundamental shift in life course development and opposes values and norms of individualization, such as autonomy, agency and successful aging. Latest life can therefore present a developmental dilemma between increasing constraints and reduced agency potential.

In this conceptual presentation I will analyze how couples negotiate and manage aging. I will emphasize the heterogeneity of dyadic aging related to intradyadic dedifferentiation with respect to gender, and new intra- and interdyadic differentiation due to health. Furthermore, I will focus on the tension between autonomy and belonging, as well as between the dyadic present and the individual future. I will use empirical examples from a longitudinal mixed-methods project related to nursing homes; death and widowhood; care needs; and structural reconfigurations on the couple level.

Whether and how well couples adapt to aging defines not only their individual and dyadic well-being, but also intergenerational family structures and institutional care needs beyond the couple. This relates to the complex interplay between couple relationships and families, life courses and aging, but also and crucially between functional and emotional autonomy.

Session 4C: Power relations in families

Chair: Laura Bernardi

Room: K3

Doing Democracy in Families: Fathers, Teens, and the Practice of Democracy at Home (Johanna Possinger, Claudia Zerle-Elsäßer & Thomas Eichhorn)

EH Ludwigsburg, DJI München, Universität Jena

This mixed-methods project situates itself at the intersection of family sociology and political science exploring fathers' care engagement for their teenage children and the joint negotiation of societal "mega trends" (BMFSFJ 2020). While family research in the German-speaking context has primarily focused on fathers' involvement during early childhood, little is known about paternal practices in adolescence. The few existing studies on "doing fatherhood" show a decline in routine care activities and an increase in shared conversational time often revolving around school, sports, and politics, thus linking family life with the public sphere (Baumgarten 2012, Walper/Lien 2018).

Against the backdrop of multiple societal crises such as digital transformation, increasing inequalities, international conflicts, and group-focused enmity, families represent crucial arenas of political socialization and civic learning. Quantitative analyses of the representative AID:A survey (2018 and 2023) indicate that fathers talk about politics with their children more frequently than mothers and that adolescents' political participation increases with paternal caregiving and communication. The focus on fathers is also appropriate because fathers are the first male role models for children, and questions of masculinity are a common thread running through the multiple crises of the present (Maihofer 2021).

The ongoing qualitative part of the study, based on episodic interviews with fathers and teenagers, reconstructs how "doing democracy" unfolds in everyday family interactions. The paper discusses how paternal care practices contribute to democratic socialization in adolescence and how father-teenager dyads adapt to changing societal conditions. By linking micro-level family practices with macro-level transformations, the study contributes to understanding how families act as social spaces where democracy is practiced, learned, and sustained. The presentation will highlight key survey insights and discuss how paternal care practices can strengthen democratic resilience within families facing societal change.

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Sexual autonomy and SDG 5.6.1: International comparison and regional determinants (Daria Shapoval & Isabella Buber-Ennser)

Vienna Institute of Demography, Austrian Academy of Sciences

Sexual autonomy is a concept that describes one's sexual behaviours as "volitional, chosen, and self-determined" (Sanchez & Boike, 2005, p. 1447). The indicator Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.6.1 is part of SDG 5 for gender equality from the perspective of sexual and reproductive health and rights. It focuses on the proportion of women aged 15-49 who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, and reproductive health care. Thus, it reflects the concept of sexual autonomy, whereby women's sexual behaviours are self-determined, and where women maintain the power to make informed decisions about their own body and sexuality (Aboagye et al., 2022; Sanchez & Boike, 2005; Willie et al., 2023).

The study is based on individual data from the second round of the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS-II), where data collection started around 2020 and which included questions on sexual autonomy and contraceptive autonomy (Gauthier et al., 2023; Gauthier et al., 2025). The analytical sample includes roughly 44.000 persons aged 18-49 years in 13 countries in Europe and abroad. We compare sexual autonomies across countries, disaggregating by socio-demographic characteristics as well as aspects of partnership. Moreover, partnership satisfaction and well-being will be taken into consideration. While the focus is on women, analyses will also be carried out for men.

First results on sexual autonomy reveal substantial variation across the countries and by gender. The Republic of Moldova turns out to be characterized by a comparably low share of women reporting sexual autonomy. Women's ability to refuse sexual intercourse to a partner in this country progressively declines as they get older, from 81% in the 18-19 age group to 66% in the 40-49 age group. No such pattern is observed among men, although their level of sexual autonomy is 10% lower (63% and 73%, respectively).

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“Abuse was in the room” - Gender-specific Gaslighting in Couples, Family and Parenting Counselling (Maria Burschel)

IU Internationale Hochschule Erfurt

Current statistics from the German Federal Criminal Police indicate that women and girls increasingly experience violence in their families and partnerships (BKA, 2024). While physical violence often receives focus, psychological abuse such as gaslighting is widespread and serves as the breeding ground for physical violence. Gaslighting – a manipulation that questions an individual's perception and judgment until they doubt themselves (Klein 2025) – is both an individual and societal phenomenon that systematically weakens certain groups, particularly women, and reinforces patriarchal power structures (Sweet, 2019).

Counseling of families and couples (§§ 16, 17, 28 SGB VIII, German Social Code) aims to enhance parenting skills, resolve conflicts, increase gender equality, and ensure children's well-being. Counseling services could identify gender-specific gaslighting (Burschel, 2023) early on and take preventive measures. This would contribute to violence prevention and empower women and disadvantaged individuals.

Despite extensive research on partnership violence, there is limited knowledge regarding recognition and addressing of gaslighting in family counseling. Gaslighting is difficult to detect when clients seek counseling for issues unrelated to it, such as separation or parenting difficulties. In these situations, gaslighting may manifest when certain desires or demands are overlooked or belittled. Victims often struggle to identify gaslighting and may internalize the perpetrator's perspective, a dynamic explained by "traumatic bonding" (Wahren, 2022).

The central research question is: How can gender-specific gaslighting be recognized and prevented in SGB VIII counseling settings to empower affected individuals? To address this, eight

expert interviews were conducted and analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz, 2018) and metaphor analysis (Schmitt et al., 2028).

The results aim to stimulate further research on gaslighting in partnerships and families and provide evidence-based recommendations for identifying and preventing interpersonal and institutional gaslighting in counseling. This can strengthen social participation and counteract structural disadvantages.

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Session 5A: Child Well-Being in Separated Families

Chair: Bernhard Riederer

Room: K1

Child Well-Being in Separated Families: How are Stability and Change in Post-Separation Care Arrangements Linked to Emotional Problems in Germany? (Claudia Recksiedler, Christine Entleitner-Phleps, & Alexandra Langmeyer)

German Youth Institute, Germany

Changing legal and cultural conditions across Europe led to a higher share of parents practicing shared care upon separation, in part because this allows for shared parental roles and children's access to both parents. However, there is only sparse information concerning rates of change and stability in shared compared to sole parental care arrangements, and the respective ripple effects on families. This is particularly true for the D-A-CH region, as prior research on post-separation care arrangements was largely based on cross-sectional studies. Using data from the representative panel "Growing up in Germany" that collected information on about 500 minors in post-separation families between 2019 and 2023, we probe how post-separation care arrangements evolve and examine how change (vs. stability) in care arrangements is linked to children's emotional well-being. Measures include, among others, children's overnight stays at each parental residence, the frequency of parent-child contact with the non-resident parent, emotional child well-being based on the standardized Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, and families' socio-economic standing. Preliminary descriptive analyses showed that the share of children in both shared and sole care arrangements was highly stable over time (i.e., about 70% of children remained in their care arrangement) and that when changes occurred, a decrease in the amount and intensity of care was more frequent than an increase in such. Regression models further revealed that, even after adjusting for families' socio-economic standing, practicing a stable shared care arrangement was linked to lower levels of children's emotional problems compared to those in stable sole care arrangements. Decreasing care was less favorable for emotional child well-being compared to practicing a stable shared care arrangement as well. Findings are discussed in light of the unique characteristics of the German welfare state, issues related to self-selection into care arrangements, as well as implications for policy and practice.

Prevalence and characteristics of custody arrangements in Switzerland (Magdalena Spasic)

University of Lausanne

Objective

With this study we aim at providing an overview of custody arrangements in Switzerland. First, we assess the prevalence of lone physical custody (LPC), equal shared physical custody (equal SPC) and unequal shared physical custody (unequal SPC). Second, we analyze the association between different family, parental, former parental couple, child characteristics and custody arrangements. And finally, we examine child well-being differentials between the custody arrangements.

Data and methods

We draw on the FamyCH data to assess the prevalence of custody arrangements and for the subsequent analyses. The FamyCH survey is a national online survey in Switzerland that targeted families with at least one child aged 0-15 (the target child) living in different custody arrangements including lone custody, shared custody and non separated families. We employ descriptive analyses and multinomial logistic regressions using the type of custody arrangement as the dependent variable (LPC, equal SPC and unequal SPC). We then explore through linear regressions the association of different custody arrangements with children well-being indicators (including the SDQ-25).

Results

Preliminary findings indicate that there is still a selection effect in Switzerland with SPC parents reporting higher education levels, higher relationship quality with their children, closer distance and more egalitarian division of childcare before separation despite the recent legislative changes aiming to encourage SPC.

Good Mother, Good Father – Constructions of Parenthood in the Discursive Field of Custody Proceedings in Austria since 1945 (Marlies Zuccato-Doutlik)

Department of Sociology, University of Vienna

Parental separation leads to family reorganization. Especially when custody is negotiated in court, family troubles become troubling families, applying values and norms to family and parental practices. This contribution is based on my dissertation, which examines the discursive construction of parenthood in family court proceedings from a family and knowledge sociological perspective. These proceedings are understood as a discursive field where norms, hierarchies of knowledge, and speaking positions become visible. Using court records from 32

custody cases from 1961 to 2018 in Austria, I employ an innovatively extended methodological approach combining the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse Analysis and pattern interpretation analysis to reconstruct collective knowledge systems, power structures, and gender-specific attributions.

The main findings highlight significant power imbalances within custody proceedings. Professional actors hold greater interpretative authority than parents, whose legitimacy as speakers depends on their discursive practices and resources. Additionally, a clear hierarchy of knowledge systems emerges, with professional and scientific knowledge valued above everyday knowledge of parents and children. Gender-specific evaluation logics are pervasive, leading to contrasting subject positions for parents: the "good" and "bad" mother on the one side and the "good", "bad" and "special" father on the other side. Across time, the dominant storyline in custody proceedings is one of "failed" parenthood, shaped by heteronormative ideals of family and increasing emphasis on child welfare. The ideal of a perfect mother or father is unattainable, as parents can only approximate these ideals in the sense of doing and displaying child welfare and new family.

This research contributes new theoretical, methodological, and empirical perspectives to family sociology. By integrating gender-specific approaches into concepts like Doing Good Parenthood and Troubling Families, the dissertation reveals how constructions and evaluation logics of parenthood and family have persisted and evolved over six decades.

Parent-child discrepancies in children's well-being between nuclear and post-separation families (Sven Alexander Bocker)

University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany

A large body of research has focused on the well-being of children and adolescents of separated parents. A consistent finding is that these children tend to have lower well-being in several areas of life than children from nuclear families (Härkönen et al., 2017). However, many of these studies rely on proxy reports from parents (Müller, 2019). The literature indicates that parent and child responses often vary (De Los Reyes et al., 2015), with children usually reporting lower levels of well-being (Rescorla et al., 2013). Since research frequently informs decision-making, systematic discrepancies between children's and parents' reports have significant implications for social policy and the interpretation of research studies.

Sociological studies do not always adequately address differences in informant reports, and so far, little is known about the association between parental separation and these discrepancies. Previous research on discrepancies has focused primarily on situational factors and on characteristics of parents, children, and the family (informant characteristics) (e.g., De Los Reyes & Kazdin, 2005). To investigate whether reports from parents and children differ, the extent of

these differences, and whether specific family characteristics can explain them, this study analyzed two large-scale surveys from Germany (pairfam and KiGGS).

The present study confirms that children and adolescents in Germany report lower levels of well-being than their parents. However, contrary to theoretical assumptions, the discrepancies were smaller in separated families than in nuclear families. This finding challenges the assumption that higher stress levels are associated with distorted parental reports. The results from the pairfam data could be replicated with data from the German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents (KiGGS), which comprises a much larger sample. Therefore, when interpreting data on child well-being, researchers and practitioners must critically account for the systematic discrepancy between parent- and child-reported well-being.

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Session 5B: Parenting Practices and Inequality

Chair: Julia Sauter

Room: K2

Parenting Practices and Self-Efficacy in Children and Adolescents (Mirjam Weis, Inga Simm, Anja Linberg, Alexandra Langmeyer)

German Youth Institute, Munich, Germany

The development of self-efficacy is a key factor for the positive development of children and adolescents, particularly in times of rapid social change and shifting family dynamics, as self-efficacy can be understood as the belief in one's ability to master challenges successfully. Previous studies have shown that self-efficacy is strongly related to motivation, school achievement, and educational aspirations. However, the role of parenting practices for the development of self-efficacy has received little attention so far – even though the family environment is crucial for whether children and adolescents develop confidence in their own competences. The present study addresses this gap and examines the relations between parenting practices, self-efficacy, and educational aspirations among children and adolescents, taking into account parents' educational background.

The analyses are based on data from the AID:A Survey 2023 ("Growing up in Germany") and the sample consisted of 2,488 children and adolescents aged 9 to 17 years as well as their parents. Self-efficacy was measured by children's and adolescents' responses to four items on how well they are able to find solutions to problems and cope with difficulties. Parents answered three items on autonomy-supportive parenting practices.

Regression analyses showed that children whose parents reported autonomy-supportive parenting showed significantly higher levels of self-efficacy than children of less autonomy-supportive parents. Moreover, self-efficacy was positively related to educational aspirations. The results emphasize the importance of parenting practices that foster autonomy and confidence in one's abilities for children's positive development. By supporting independence and trust in personal competence, parents can strengthen their children's self-efficacy, which in turn promotes educational aspirations and motivation. Further analyses using a structural equation model will examine indirect relations and moderation effects. By highlighting how family contexts support or limit the development of self-efficacy, this study contributes to a better understanding of how families navigate challenges from societal change and how inequalities in resources and support may impact children's development.

Class Inequality in Parental Activities with Children among Dual-Earner Couples: Evidence from the 2022 German Time Use Survey (Tabea Naujoks^{1,2}, Heike Trappe¹ & Michaela Kreyenfeld²)

1 University of Rostock, 2 Hertie School

Using data from the German Time Use Survey 2022, this study examines how social class influences parental time investments in childcare. Parental time spent with children has increased in recent decades, with a particular increase in activities that support children's education and development. Such trends, often referred to as the "intensification of parenthood," are shaped by growing societal pressures and unequal capacities across social classes to meet these demands. We categorize parents into four social classes based on four-digit occupational codes. Based on Oesch's framework we distinguish unskilled workers, skilled workers, business owners, lower service class, and higher service class. A separate category includes persons who did not work in the past week. We employ class as an individual characteristic, but also account for the partner's social class for individuals in couple households. Time spent with children is analyzed in two dimensions: routine care (e.g., physical care, supervision) and interactional activities (e.g., reading, playing). Our descriptive analysis shows that parents from higher social classes, especially those in the higher service class, spend more time with their children on interactional activities than parents from lower social classes. These patterns are observed for weekdays and weekends, although the differences are smaller on weekends. The multiple regression analyses further examine how social class and gender interact while controlling for other standard confounders (e.g., age of children, age, citizenship, region).

U.S. Parenting Norms in Europe? A Replication and Extension of Ishizuka (2019) in Switzerland (Matthias Klingler, Benita Combet, Larissa Fritsch & Sandra Gilgen Klingler)

University of Zurich, Switzerland; University of Bern, Switzerland

Across Western societies, parental time investment has increased over the past fifty years, especially among higher SES parents (Altintas, 2016; Dotti Sani & Treas, 2016). Based on extensive ethnographic research in the US, Annette Lareau (2002, 2011) showed that not only time investment varies by SES but that parenting practices and norms also show status differentials. Lower SES parents typically prioritize meeting children's material needs and granting them autonomy, a style Lareau calls accomplishment of natural growth. Higher SES parents, by contrast, structure children's lives, foster their talents with an eye toward future advantage, and actively intervene on their behalf in institutions, a style she terms concerted cultivation.

Quantitative research testing Lareau's qualitative findings on SES differences in parenting attitudes remains scarce and largely limited to the US (Hastings & Pesando, 2024; Ishizuka, 2019). To address this gap, we replicate and extend Ishizuka's (2019) innovative survey experiment design in the Swiss context, presenting respondents with vignettes of parenting scenarios drawn from Lareau's ethnography and asking them to rate the fictional parents. A strength of our study is that, like Ishizuka (2019), we embedded our experiment within a population-representative survey (Büchler et al., 2023; CHARLS Wave 2), enabling more generalizable conclusions than experiments often based on subpopulations or convenience samples.

Our preliminary findings mirror Ishizuka's (2019) US results: Evaluations of parenting styles do not differ by respondents' SES, and both higher- and lower-SES respondents rate concerted cultivation more positively than accomplishment of natural growth. One exception is parents' behavior toward institutions such as schools, where Swiss parents generally prefer a non-confrontational and trusting approach.

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Who decides? The dyadic significance of parental attitudes for children's Covid-19 vaccination uptake (Miriam Trübner¹, Alexander Patzina², Martin Bujard³)

1Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz & Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung; 2 Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg; 3 Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung & Universität Heidelberg

The worldwide rise in vaccination hesitancy among parents represents a significant setback for public health. Against this background, we examine the attitudes and decisions of parents in Germany regarding vaccination of their children during the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on wave 2 (2022/23) of the German Family Demography Panel Study FReDA (1245 heterosexual couples with children aged 5-11 (N=989), and children aged 12-17 (N=497)), we apply logistic regression analyses to examine, first, the association between parents' attitudes towards Covid-19 vaccination on the probability of their children to be vaccinated, second, the decision-making power of mothers and fathers in the face of disagreement, and third, the heterogeneity of families with differing views on gender roles and childcare arrangements. Results show that fathers and mothers generally express positive attitudes towards the Covid-19 vaccination. However, at the couple level, differences become apparent; while most parents agree, yet some parents hold differing perspective on Covid-19 vaccination influencing the vaccination decision for their children. It turns out that father's and mother's attitudes are equally relevant for the vaccination uptake of teenagers, but mothers' attitudes are more decisive for the vaccination of younger children. The gender effect can be attributed to the generally higher involvement of mothers in childcare. However, in families with traditional views on gender roles, fathers have even more decision-making power than women regarding the vaccination of their child. These results also show that an anti-vaccination stance in most cases impedes vaccinations regardless of whether the mother or the father adopts this attitude. These findings on the dyadic parental decision-making regarding children's vaccination provide important implications for policy makers and health professionals for closing emerging vaccination gaps in children, also regarding other diseases. Beyond this, the results reveal key nuances of gender inequality among contemporary couples.

Session 5C: Family Diversity, Attitudes and Inequality

Chair: Anne-Kristin Kuhnt

Room: K3

Attitudes Toward Family Diversity: A Systematic Review and Conceptual Framework of Structure and Composition ([Adar Hoffman](#)¹, [Anahita Mehrpour](#)² & [Laura Bernardi](#)³)

Institute of Social Sciences and Centre Lives; University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Family forms have diversified globally over recent decades, yet public attitudes and institutional practices often remain anchored in traditional ideals of the heterosexual, two-biological-parent family. This systematic review synthesizes research published between 2013 and 2024 on attitudes toward diverse family structures, extending previous reviews by Ganong et al. (1990) and Valiquette-Tessier et al. (2016). Following PRISMA guidelines and complemented by bibliometric analysis, over 70 empirical studies were identified that examine perceptions of single-parent, step-, and same-sex parent families, comparing them to each other and-or to a traditional nuclear family ideal. Across contexts, non-normative families continue to be evaluated less favorably, particularly regarding parental competence, family stability, and child outcomes. However, recent evidence reveals increasing contextual differentiation: biases are weaker in settings with inclusive policy frameworks and greater social exposure to family diversity. Beyond documenting these trends, the review advances a conceptual clarification by distinguishing two analytical dimensions—structure (e.g., single-parent, step-family, or intact) and composition (e.g., gender and sexual orientation of parents)—to organize and interpret heterogeneous findings. This framework highlights variation—and occasional inconsistency—in how “family type” has been operationalized across studies, often conflating structural and compositional dimensions. We argue that future research should adopt multidimensional definitions of family forms, enabling clearer theoretical articulation of how social norms, gendered expectations, and family processes intersect in shaping perceptions of family diversity.

Challenges of Established Gender and Parental Roles in Evolving Societies: The Non-Birthing Parent in Lesbian-Queer Family Constellations ([Okka Zimmermann](#)¹ & [Jana Szeimies](#)²)

1 IU Internationale Hochschule (Campus Braunschweig), 2 Freelance Researcher, former at TU Braunschweig

Volatile labour markets, societal transformation processes, and the digitalisation of work are shaping contemporary family structures and intensifying debates about gendered divisions of labour and parenting models. Lesbian-queer families face particular challenges while

simultaneously offering innovative approaches to overcoming traditional gender roles. This qualitative study therefore examines how non-birthing parents from lesbian-queer partnerships shape, adapt and transform their parental roles through semi-structured interviews. Among others, it analyses strategies of normalisation, role negotiation and family identity formation.

The findings reveal that non-birthing parents operate in a tension between marginality and conformity. While encountering structural disadvantages and legal uncertainties, they simultaneously develop egalitarian family models with conscious negotiation of care work and parental responsibilities. These couples more frequently practice symmetrical divisions of labour and reflective parenting concepts that transcend the modernised breadwinner model.

The study demonstrates how arrangements of time (for family, work and other contexts) as well as responsibilities must be more consciously negotiated in queer families to avoid conflicts in the context of parenting. At the same time, these families function as pioneers of transformative parenting models that question traditional gender binarity and develop hybrid parental identities. Results furthermore show how micro-sociological family processes are linked to macro-structural societal changes and how innovative solutions of queer families can be for contemporary challenges of binary gender norms and work-family reconciliation.

The research findings provide empirical evidence for family policy reform needs in descent law to avoid discrimination of queer families, active support for queer families to navigate within a context dominated by family norms based on heterosexual couples and binary gender norms. This field of research can furthermore contribute to the integration of gender and family research on the topic of queer families.

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LGBTQ+ Families Navigating Inequalities, Normalization, and Struggles for Recognition (Julia Teschlade, Mona Motakef, Christine Wimbauer)

Humboldt Universität zu Berlin; TU Dortmund

LGBTQ+ families have gained increasing visibility in recent years. In German-speaking countries, legal developments toward greater equality are evident, exemplified by the introduction of same-sex marriage (2017) and the Self-Determination Act (SBGG) (2024). Nevertheless, these changes remain ambivalent: while they reduce deficits in the legal recognition of same-sex relationships, social inequalities persist and new forms of exclusions continue to shape the lived realities of LGBTQ+ families.

Our presentation draws on findings from the DFG-funded project “Ambivalent Recognition: Doing Re-production and Doing Family Beyond the Heterosexual Nuclear Family” (No. 367423336). The study is based on 19 individual, couple, and family interviews, analyzed within a Grounded Theory framework. We examine how LGBTQ+ families realize their desire for children (doing reproduction), the barriers they encounter, and how they navigate social inequalities in everyday life (doing family and doing normality). Theoretically, our study is informed by gender theory, research on social inequality, and theories of recognition.

For decades, LGBTQ+ people were denied the very possibility of forming families. Our analysis traces their often challenging paths to parenthood, shaped by enduring legal and social obstacles. Two-mother families, multi-parent families, and trans* parent families continue to experience legal, institutional, and intersubjective inequalities. They are frequently compelled to demonstrate that they constitute a “real” family. We interpret these practices of normalization not merely as forms of adaptation, but as existential responses to persistent discrimination. In doing so, families develop diverse strategies to establish a sense of normality in everyday life.

Finally, we address the struggle for recognition faced by LGBTQ+ families. Drawing on Butler, Honneth, and our previous research, we identify key dimensions of recognition deficits and analyze how families actively challenge them. We also explore whether subversive practices can generate new forms of social self-evidence. Our findings indicate that, while LGBTQ+ families partly draw on heterosexual family norms, they simultaneously reshape legal and cultural understandings of parenthood and kinship. Overall, we argue that sexual orientation and gender identity remain central determinants of social inequality, profoundly shaping individuals’ agency and life chances.

Sexual minority orientation and singlehood: A double jeopardy for life satisfaction? (Lisa Schmid¹, Karsten Hank² & André Ernst²)

1 GESIS- Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Cologne (Germany); 2 University of Cologne, Department of Sociology and Social Psychology, Cologne (Germany)

Previous research investigating well-being disparities by sexual orientation almost entirely neglected sexual minority singles. This appears as an unfortunate gap in the literature, because sexual minority singles may be 'doubly stigmatized', being stereotyped based on their sexual orientation and their single status, which might translate into particularly low levels of subjective well-being. We assess this issue using data from Wave 2 (W2B) of the German Family Demography Panel Study (FReDA; n = 17,344) to compare the life satisfaction of sexual minority identified singles with (a) their sexual minority partnered counterparts, (b) straight-identified singles and (c) straight-identified couples. OLS regression results revealed that singles as well as people with sexual minority orientation exhibited significantly lower levels of life satisfaction than partnered and straight-identified individuals. Notably, singlehood was substantially more negatively associated with life satisfaction than sexual minority orientation. Moreover, we found no indication of a cumulation of disadvantage among sexual minority singles. That is, any deviation from the normative ideal of living in a heterosexual relationship has negative consequences and it seems largely irrelevant, whether the individual deviates in just one or in multiple dimensions. Future studies should continue investigating single individuals and sexual minority orientation people in their own right, ideally from a longitudinal perspective and delving deeper into specific mechanisms underlying disparities in well-being.

Session 6A: Fertility: Attitudes, Intentions, Realisation

Chair: Laura Bernardi

Room: K1

Attitudes toward having children: What is the role of gender, migration background and religion? (Ellen Jahr, Nadja Milewski, Sarah Carol)

Federal Institute for Population Research, Wiesbaden (DE); University College Dublin, School of Sociology, Dublin (IE)

Previous research on migrant fertility in Europe has focused mainly on migrant women's fertility behaviour. Gender patterns and attitudes towards having children remain understudied, even though they may provide a more long-term indicator of socio-economic assimilation and acculturation processes of migrant populations. We investigate whether the perceived importance of parenthood differs between migrants and natives in Germany, how these differences vary by gender, and to what extent religiosity plays a role in shaping such attitudes.

Our theoretical considerations are derived from frameworks on migrant fertility and migrant assimilation. Migrants and their descendants may adapt fertility attitudes to those of the majority population but these assimilation patterns might be gendered and vary across religious groups and by individuals' religiosity.

Drawing on the first wave of the German Family Demography Panel Study (FReDA, 2021), we analyse men and women aged 18–50 ($N \approx 16,700$), distinguishing between first-generation migrants, their descendants, and natives. Our two outcome variables are based on agreement with the statements that women, and men respectively, need to have children to live a fulfilled life. We employ multivariable logistic regression models to assess group differences and the moderating role of religiosity.

Our results show that only a minority of respondents (around 13%) agrees that having a child is necessary, with similar patterns for the expectation for men and women to have children. Migrants—especially first-generation and highly religious individuals—are substantially more likely to consider parenthood essential. Non-/low religious migrants' descendants do not differ from non-/low religious natives. Gendered patterns emerge, with women overall being less likely to agree that having a child is needed.

Our findings highlight that gender and religion play an important role in shaping attitudinal assimilation of migrants and their descendants to majority culture, with migrant descendants and less religious migrants having attitudes more similar to the majority population in Germany.

From the desire to have children to having children: Urban-rural differences in realization (Bernhard Riederer)

Vienna Institute of Demography/Austrian Academy of Sciences

Demographic research has repeatedly found urban-rural differences in fertility. In Europe, cities are usually characterized by lower fertility rates, a higher age of mothers at (first) birth, and a higher proportion of late fertility than rural regions. Previous analyses of childbearing intentions, however, indicate that they are not (or not much) lower in cities than in rural areas. The desired number of children in rural regions in Austria, for instance, has gradually converged to the initially lower number of desired children in urban areas during the last decades. However, the number of children women desire is usually higher than the realized number of children. The realization of short-term childbearing intentions has been shown to be also more likely in rural regions than in urban regions in Europe. In cities, the realization of existing desires to have children has more often been postponed or abandoned. Previous research, however, has been usually restricted to periods of 3-4 years. The combination of survey data with individual level register data allows to go beyond this short-term perspective.

For the present study, Austrian Microcensus data from 2016 has been linked with data from different registers available at the Austrian Microdata Center (AMDC). My analyses reveal pronounced urban-rural differences in the realisation of the self-reported desired number of children. I also examine the relevance of structural factors (e.g. housing) and differences in population composition (education, migrant background etc.) for the realisation of childbearing desires and urban-rural differences. Specific focus has been directed at women age 35+ as late motherhood is becoming increasingly important in general, and especially in cities. In addition, the available observation window (2016-2023) allowed for insights regarding consequences of recent crises for the development of births.

Occupational Stressors, Perceived Stress, and Women's Fertility in Germany (Chen Luo, Anna Matysiak & Ewa Jarosz)

University of Warsaw

This study examines how occupational stressors influence women's likelihood of becoming pregnant in Germany, focusing on the physical and psychosocial mechanisms linking work conditions to fertility behavior. Job-related stressors have intensified across occupations in recent decades, raising concerns about their long-term effects on health and well-being (Sonnentag et al., 2023). Previous research has provided valuable insights into the relationship between stress and fertility, particularly through studies on infertility, fertility treatment outcomes, fertility intentions, and miscarriage (Dehkordi et al., 2025; Qu et al., 2017). While these studies identify key biological and behavioral pathways, they primarily address short-term effects in clinical or selective populations. Moreover, individuals vary in their responses to job stressors (Limm et al.,

2010), leading to differences in perceived stress even among those in similar jobs, and these differences may, in turn, affect fecundity and childbearing decisions (Mínguez-Alarcón et al., 2023). However, few studies have explored how the interaction between objective job stressors and subjective stress perceptions shapes reproductive outcomes.

Using data from Waves 3–11 of the German Family Panel (pairfam), combined with occupation-level indicators of job stress derived from the 2012 Survey of the Working Population on Qualification and Working Conditions in Germany, we analyze whether women in more stressful occupations are more or less likely to have a child in the following year. Logistic regression models reveal that women in physically demanding occupations have a lower probability of childbirth, whereas those in psychosocially demanding occupations are more likely to conceive. Furthermore, women reporting higher self-perceived stress show an increased likelihood of pregnancy in psychosocially demanding jobs, while pregnancy probabilities are similar across occupations among those with lower perceived stress.

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The Role of Societal Pessimism in Childfree Rationales: Quantitative and Qualitative insights from the Netherlands (Nola Cammu, Katya Ivanova & Mirthe Megens)

Tilburg University (Social and Behavioral Sciences)

Session 6B: Gender Ideology and Division of Work

Chair: Anne-Kristin Kuhnt

Room: K2

Multidimensional gender ideology measures and their relation to the division of unpaid labor (Katrin Firl)

GESIS - Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences

Across countries, including Germany, women continue to perform a disproportionate share of unpaid labor, particularly housework, leaving them disadvantaged in terms of finances, health, and time (Grunow, 2019). A robust body of research across different country-contexts has shown that individual-level gender ideology is a key predictor of how unpaid household labor is distributed within heterosexual couples (e.g., Aassve et al., 2014).

However, most studies have based their measure of individual gender ideology on additive indices of gender role attitude (GRA) items, treating gender ideology as a unidimensional construct. Recent scholarship increasingly questions this approach, emphasizing that gender ideology is multidimensional - attitudes toward one aspect of gender roles (e.g., male supremacy) do not necessarily align with attitudes toward others (e.g., maternal employment) and different dimensions of gender ideology do not necessarily relate to the division of labor (e.g., Begall et al., 2023). Next to that, widely used GRA items in panel surveys have been criticized for their limited ability to capture contemporary variation in gender attitudes (Walter, 2018). Many items that revealed ideological differences in the 1990s now exhibit strong skewness toward egalitarianism, obscuring nuances and recent shifts within different dimensions of gender ideology.

To address these issues, this study analyzes the extensive GRA item battery from sub-wave W3B (2023) of the German Family Demography Panel Study (FReDA) in their relationship to the division of household labor. Importantly, these items capture attitudes toward both women's and men's roles, enabling a nuanced assessment of gender ideology. By examining single items and applying latent class analysis, we identify multidimensional patterns of gender ideology and investigate how these patterns relate to the division of household labor among heterosexual couples. This approach provides new insights into the interplay between distinct ideological dimensions and the persistence of gendered inequalities in unpaid work.

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Effects of Actors' and Partners' Transitions to Permanent Employment on Subjective Well-Being in German Couples (Daniel Baron)

Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg

In contemporary Western societies, families face increasing economic risks and challenges to their well-being due to the ongoing erosion of stable employment relationships (Hacker 2006, Kalleberg 2018). For instance, empirical analyses revealed that individuals in non-standard employment, such as fixed-term employees, exhibit lower levels of life satisfaction, mental health, and perceived economic security compared to those in permanent employment (De Cuyper et al. 2008, De Cuyper et al. 2019). Additionally, research on couples has revealed that a partner's fixed-term employment (Scheuring et al. 2021) or unemployment (Inanc 2018, Voßemer et al. 2024) can have negative crossover effects on the individual's well-being. Moreover, some studies have addressed the important reverse question and found that workers' subjective well-being (e.g., life satisfaction, affective well-being) increases when they transition from insecure to secure employment (De Cuyper et al. 2009, Gebel/Voßemer 2014, Schumann/Kuchinke 2020).

Dyadic approaches to family research, such as spillover-crossover theory (Bakker/Demerouti, 2013) and exchange theory (Sabatelli, 2022), suggest that transitioning to permanent employment may reduce economic hardship for couples and increase the well-being of each dyad member. However, the effects of transitioning from fixed-term to permanent employment on subjective well-being, such as life satisfaction, have rarely been examined for either the actor or their partner. This study addresses this research gap by applying a novel research design. Using longitudinal data from the GSOEP, we will estimate Longitudinal Actor-Partner Interdependence Models (L-APIM) (Gistelinck/Loeys 2018) to illustrate the effects of transitions into permanent employment, as well as their socio-economic contexts, on the well-being of both actors and their partners. Preliminary results indicate that actors' as well as partners' transitions to permanent employment increase actors' life satisfaction.

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Stalled Gender Revolution? Longitudinal Patterns of Paid and Unpaid Labour in Swiss Dual-Earner Couples (Flavien Bonelli^{1,3}, Stephanie Steinmetz^{1,3} & Boris Wernli^{1,2,3})

1 University of Lausanne, Switzerland; 2 Swiss center of expertise in the social sciences - FORS, Lausanne, Switzerland; 3 LIVES Center, Lausanne, Switzerland

Balancing professional and domestic responsibilities remains a persistent challenge in dual-earner couples, even in countries with high female labour market participation such as Switzerland. Despite progress toward gender equality, women continue to carry a disproportionate share of unpaid work, revealing enduring asymmetries in household labour division. This study investigates how these patterns evolve among Swiss dual-earner couples and what drives persistent inequalities.

Using longitudinal data from the Swiss Household Panel (SHP), the analysis follows 900 heterosexual dual-earner couples observed for at least seven consecutive years. Multichannel sequence analysis is used to identify distinct trajectories of paid and unpaid work, allowing for a dynamic understanding of how couples organise and renegotiate labour divisions.

Four main configurations emerge: (1) dual full-time; (2) one-and-a-half earner with more equal housework; (3) dual part-time; and (4) one-and-a-half earner with unequal housework. Across these clusters, women's unpaid workload remains consistently higher, even when both partners work full-time. The presence of children, especially two or more, is the strongest predictor of unequal divisions, reinforcing traditional gender roles. Marital status, women's education, and men's access to flexible work arrangements further influence household models: highly educated women are less likely to enter part-time, housework-intensive roles, while flexible male work organisation supports more balanced arrangements.

Overall, these findings highlight the persistence of modified male-breadwinner arrangements and the slow progress toward a more egalitarian division of labour. They provide dynamic evidence of how gendered work patterns evolve and persist over the life course, even among dual-earner couples, supporting the notion of a stalled gender revolution.

Gender differences in social integration: The role of paid work (Mirko Braack & Daniela Grunow)

Research Institute Social Cohesion (RISC) and Institute of Empirical-Analytical Research (InFER) at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Paid work is a key driver of social integration, considered more powerful than unpaid work. Yet, despite rising equality in gendered work-care divisions accompanying the Second Demographic Transition, gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work persist. Based on gendered employment

patterns in Germany, women would be expected to report lower levels of social integration than men. Paradoxically, research shows that women report higher levels of social integration and more integration stability in the face of disruptive career events. This study aims to shed light on this paradox by employing a new concept of social integration to gender inequalities in paid work. We ask, to what extent respondents experience occupation-specific integration potential through the lens of own gender ideology, thus contributing to gender differences in social integration.

We use two waves of the German Social Cohesion Panel (2021-2023). Our analytical sample includes respondents aged 18 to 67, comprising 2,315 men and 2,411 women. Social integration potential is measured using occupational classes and income, while gender ideologies are identified through latent class analysis. Gender ideologies cover attitudes toward equitable divisions of paid and unpaid work, men's capability for domestic (care) work, effects of maternal employment for child well-being, men's provider role, and the use of public childcare. We estimate regression models using occupational integration potential and gender ideologies as explanatory variables and indicators of social integration as dependent variables.

Preliminary results reveal gender-specific differences in occupational integration potential. Men report, despite their on average superior occupational positions, lower social support networks than women. Competing gender ideologies shape these patterns. These findings highlight that employment is both a driver of gendered social integration and a source of gender inequality. Internalized gender ideologies thus contribute to the stalling of the gender revolution, illustrating the complex interplay between work, gender, and social integration.